Vopak Victoria Energy Terminal Project

Scoping Requirements FAQs July 2025

1. What is the Vopak Victoria Energy Terminal Project?

The Vopak Victoria Energy Terminal Project (the project) is a proposed floating liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminal in Port Phillip Bay, approximately 19 kilometres east from Avalon. It would process LNG and feed it into the existing onshore gas supply system using an underwater pipeline. The aim of the project is to provide Victorian's access to a reliable supply of natural gas from the global market that can scale up and down to meet Victorian's energy needs.

Key components of the project include:

- Offshore facilities; including a marine berth for the Floating Storage Regasification Unit (FSRU) vessel, and marine platforms.
- The subsea high pressure gas pipeline (approximately 19 kilometres in length), and two 19-kilometre-high voltage cables that connect the offshore facilities to the onshore pipeline and high voltage cables. This component includes a 1.5-kilometre trenchless shore crossing for both the pipeline and cables to approximately 500 metres inland.
- Onshore facilities; including a gas receiving station (GRS) and associated infrastructure including nitrogen generation plant, 7.5-kilometre onshore gas pipeline and tie-in station to the gas transmission system, high voltage cables from the trenchless exit site to the GRS site.
- Onshore underground transmission line, extending 14 to 19 kilometres in existing road reserves between a new terminal station at Lara, and a new substation on Beach Road, Avalon.

2. What is the purpose of the EES scoping requirements?

Vopak Victoria Energy Terminal Pty Ltd (Vopak) is preparing an EES for the project.

The scoping requirements set out the matters to be investigated and documented within the EES. The EES will include a description of the proposed project, rigorous assessment of its potential effects on the environment and approaches to manage those effects.

The EES scoping requirements have been issued by the Minister for Planning and are available on the Planning website:

https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/environmental-assessments/browse-projects/referrals/Vopak-Victoria-Energy-Terminal

3. Did the public have an opportunity to comment on the scoping requirements?

Yes. Draft scoping requirements for the EES were exhibited on the Engage Victoria website from 30 May to 23 June 2025. Notice of the draft scoping requirements' exhibition was advertised in metropolitan and local newspapers.

Thirty-five submissions were received during the public exhibition period, including from individuals, Labor Environment Action Victoria, Mornington Peninsula Labor Environment Action Network, Seafood Industry Victoria Inc and Yumbah Mussels Holdings. Five submissions received after closing time were also considered.

Redacted versions of the submissions received have been provided to Vopak Victoria Energy Terminal Pty Ltd to inform the ongoing development of the EES.

4. What issues were raised in public submissions on the draft scoping requirements?

Key concerns raised by submitters are related to:

- marine environment impacts, including disturbance and/or degradation of the hydrodynamic environment, as well as discharges of pollutants and lower temperature water;
- marine flora and fauna impacts, including degradation of habitat, electromagnetic fields, physiological and behavioural impacts to threatened and migratory marine fauna species and marine biota;
- impacts to aquaculture, commercial and recreational fishing and commercially important species in Port Phillip Bay;
- visual impacts to the seascape;
- the rationale and need for a gas import terminal;
- direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions associated with the operation of the project; and

– public safety risks and hazards.

5. What revisions have been made to the draft scoping requirements in response to public submissions?

Where appropriate, amendments have been made to the scoping requirements to address issues raised by submitters that had not been well or explicitly considered in the draft scoping requirements. Many of the issues raised were already encompassed within the draft EES scoping requirements.

The amendments made to the scoping requirements included minor updates to address the following:

– Concerns on marine flora impacts from light availability;
– Potential navigational disruption to commercial and recreational fisheries;
– Potential effects to healthy populations of species targeted or cultivated by commercial fishing operators and recreational fishers, and the ecosystems that support these species;
– Potential adverse effects to aquaculture, commercial and recreational fishing grounds, including sediment disturbance, variable nutrient loads, shading, reduced water quality, electromagnetic fields, loss of access, value of licensing rights, attraction of predatory species, and the introduction and spread of biohazards;
– Consideration of potential impacts on marine fauna from electromagnetic fields; and
– Specific reference to potential effects on coastal views and sightlines to the seascape.

6. What happens now the Minister has issued the final scoping requirements?

The proponent will proceed with the necessary information-gathering and investigations to inform the EES. This is expected to take a number of months and conclude in early 2026. The proponent will conduct its studies and prepare the EES in close consultation with DTP and the agencies on the Technical Reference Group (TRG), which DTP has put in place for this EES.

The proponent's EES will include a detailed description of the proposed project and a rigorous assessment of its potential effects on the environment and approaches to mitigation.

When completed, the EES will be placed on public exhibition, and the Minister for Planning will invite public comments. At the end of the process, the Minister will issue an assessment of the environmental effects of the project. The Minister's assessment will inform statutory/approval decisions needed for the project to proceed.

The proponent has finalised and begun to implement its EES consultation plan to engage with the public and stakeholders about the EES process and its associated investigations, ensuring it provides opportunities for input and feedback on its investigations.

7. When does Vopak expect to publicly exhibit its EES?

When the proponent believes the EES is ready, it will be reviewed by DTP, and the Minister for Planning will decide whether to authorise the EES to be exhibited. If authorised, the EES will be advertised for public comment for no less than 30 business days.

Vopak is planning for public exhibition of the EES in early 2026.

The EES and the submissions received will be referred to an inquiry to be appointed under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (EE Act). The inquiry will consider all the information before it and will report to the Minister, who will then make an assessment and provide it to decision-makers.

8. Why is an EES required for the project?

An EES is the state's most rigorous and transparent environmental assessment and is typically reserved for those projects that require integrated assessment across a range of potential adverse effects when there is potential for significant impacts. The EES will provide an integrated and transparent examination of the proposed project and its environmental effects to inform both the proponent's refinement of the proposal and the statutory decisions/ approvals needed for the project to proceed.

In August 2023 the Minister for Planning determined under the EE Act that Vopak should prepare an EES for the Vopak Victoria Energy Terminal project. The project as proposed could have a range of significant impacts, including on the:

– Terrestrial and marine environments of Port Phillip Bay, including the Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site;

- Biodiversity values, including impacts on the habitat of threatened species and communities under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999;*
- Greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Cultural and historic heritage values, including submerged Aboriginal cultural values (known, unknown, tangible, and intangible).

9. What about the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act?

The proponent referred the project (2023/09507) for a decision from the Commonwealth on whether the proposal is a 'controlled action' requiring assessment and approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

On 21 June 2022, a delegate for the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Water determined that the project was a controlled action due to the potential for significant impacts on a matter of national environmental significance namely the Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site, listed migratory species and listed threatened species and communities.

This EES is being undertaken as an accredited process set out in the bilateral agreement under the EPBC Act. It will have to assess the relevant matters of national environmental significance identified in the Commonwealth decision that the project is a 'controlled action' requiring decision under the EPBC Act.

10. What does this mean for the Viva Energy Gas Terminal project EES?

EES preparation for the Vopak Victoria Energy Terminal has no relationship with or effect on any assessment outcomes associated with the Viva Energy Gas Terminal project EES. These are two separate projects, each with its own proponent and its own EES required under the EE Act. The Minister's Assessment of the Viva Energy proposal is for that proponent and relevant decision-makers to consider. Vopak will need to progress their EES and complete their own assessment and approvals.

In Victoria an EES assessment does not confer approval of a project, rather it informs decision makers when considering project approvals. The EES preparation is a rigorous process, that ends up with the Minister for Planning issuing an assessment of the project's effects.