Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Planning Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements

Section 5.16 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*

Part 8 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021

Application Number	SSI-72887208
Project	Victoria to New South Wales Interconnector West (VNI West), which includes: • approximately 235 km of new 500kV double-circuit overhead transmission line between the NSW and Victoria border near Murrabit and the new Dinawan substation; • expansion of the new Dinawan 330 kV substation; • connection and line diversion works at the existing Wagga Wagga substation, new Dinawan substation; and the new Gugaa substation; and • ancillary works, such as temporary facilities including construction compounds and laydown areas, upgrading or establishing new access tracks, concrete batching plants, stockpiling areas, accommodation facilities, and site offices.
Location	• From the Victorian border at Murrabit to the new Dinawan substation in NSW, traversing the Murray River, Edward River and Murrumbidgee local government areas (LGAs). • From the Wagga Wagga substation and finishing at the new Gugaa substation, within the Wagga Wagga LGA.
Proponent	Transgrid
Date of Issue	22 May 2025
General Requirements	The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must meet the minimum form and content requirements as prescribed by Part 8 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021* (the Regulation) and must have regard to the Department's: • *State Significant Infrastructure Guidelines*; and • Renewable Energy Planning Framework, including the *Transmission Guideline* and its supporting *Technical Supplement for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment* (most recent version as updated from time to time). In particular, the EIS must include: • a stand-alone executive summary; • a summary of the background to the project, including alternatives that were considered to the project; • a full description of the project, accompanied by suitable maps and plans, including the: • disturbance area; • physical layout of the project over time, including sections of key components; • key uses and activities to be carried out on site; • likely timing of the project including any stages, the key phases within each stage (site preparation, construction, commissioning, operation, decommissioning and rehabilitation) and the sequencing of these stages and phases; • the Project Area (as per Table 1 of the SSI guidelines – preparing an environmental impact statement) and Development Footprint (disturbance area including but not limited to areas for infrastructure, road works, access tracks);

	• consistency in information presented in the EIS and all technical reports, including distances, development footprint, project design and infrastructure proposed, construction timeframes and receiver numbers; • the relevant strategic context for the project, having regard to: • State legislation, policies and guidelines including current initiatives to improve energy security and reliability in the National Electricity Market; • any other existing, approved or proposed projects that could result in cumulative impacts with the project; and • an analysis of the feasible alternatives to carrying out the project, considering its objectives, including the consequences of not carrying out the infrastructure; • the relevant statutory context for the project, including: • the assessment pathway for the project under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*; • the approvals required before the project may be carried out; and • any relevant matters for consideration; • a description of the engagement that was carried out during the preparation of the EIS, the key issues raised during this engagement and the proposed engagement strategy for the project if it is approved; • a risk assessment of the potential environmental impacts of the project, identifying the key issues for further assessment; • an assessment of the likely economic, social and environmental impacts of the project having regard to the requirements in any relevant Government legislation, policies and guidelines (see below), and any other significant issues identified in the risk assessment, focusing on the specific issues identified below, including: • the state of the existing environment; • community views; • the measures that would be implemented to avoid or minimise impacts, including a consolidated summary of the proposed mitigation measures for the project; • the predicted impacts of the project, including any cumulative impacts of the site and existing or proposed developments in the region taking into consideration any relevant legislation, environmental planning instruments, guidelines, policies, plans and industry codes of practice including Cumulative Impact Assessment Guideline (DPIE); and • actions proposed to deal with any uncertainties associated with the assessment; and • a detailed evaluation of the merits of the project as a whole. **Estimated Development Cost and Employment** • Provide the estimated cost (EDC) of the project prepared in accordance with the relevant planning circular using the Standard Form of EDC Report. • Provide an estimate of the retained and new jobs that would be created during the construction and operational phases of the project including details of the methodology to determine the figures provided. In addition the EIS must also be accompanied by a declaration from a Registered Environmental Practitioner that the EIS includes the information specified in the Department's *Registered Environmental Assessment Practitioner Guidelines.*
Key issues	The level of assessment of key matters must be proportionate to the likely significance of the impacts on the matter. In particular, the EIS must address the following specific matters: **Biodiversity:** • an assessment of the biodiversity impacts of the project, in accordance with the *NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*, the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) and documented in a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR). The BDAR must: - be prepared using the approved BDAR template; - document the application of the avoid, minimise and offset framework including assessing all direct, indirect and prescribed impacts in accordance with the BAM;