

29 August 2025

To: Department of Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure (DPHI)

RE: Submission in response to the VNI West EIS (SSI-72887208)

Introduction

Spark Renewables Pty Limited (Spark Renewables) is pleased to provide a submission in response to the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Victoria to NSW Interconnector West (VNI West) released for public exhibition in August 2025.

Spark Renewables is supportive of the proposed VNI West transmission line which is an essential project for unlocking the full capacity of the South West Renewable Energy Zone (SW REZ).

This submission is focussed on the following points which need to be addressed in the VNI West development application:

- Interactions between Spark Renewables' Dinawan Energy Hub (DEH) and VNI West; and
- Staging of VNI West and Transgrid infrastructure required to unlock the full capacity of the SW REZ.

1. Overview of Spark Renewables

Spark Renewables is a leading developer, long-term owner, and operator of renewable energy projects in the National Electricity Market (NEM). We have a significant development portfolio consisting of wind, solar, and storage projects. The company's portfolio comprises the Bomen Solar Farm, operational since 2020, and we are currently developing a large portfolio of solar, wind, and renewable storage projects across the NEM, including the Dinawan Energy Hub in the South West Renewable Energy Zone (SW REZ) in NSW.

More information on Spark Renewables can be found at www.sparkrenewables.com.

2. Overview of Dinawan Energy Hub

Spark Renewables has been developing the Dinawan Energy Hub (DEH), a wind, solar and battery energy storage system (BESS) project, since 2020. The wind farm is located directly west, and the solar farm directly south, of Transgrid's Dinawan Substation which is currently under construction as part of Project EnergyConnect (PEC).

The DEH was awarded access rights in the SW REZ for a total of 1,007 MW of capacity in April 2025 for the following stages:

- Wind Farm Stage 1: 357 MW
- Wind Farm Stage 2: 350 MW
- Solar Farm & BESS: 300 MW

The DEH is in the advanced stages of approval with the development applications publicly exhibited, response to submissions submitted, and planning consent expected in late 2025.

More information on the DEH can be found at www.dinawanenergyhub.com.

3. Interactions between DEH and VNI West

The project footprint for VNI West overlaps with the development footprint for the DEH Stage 1 wind farm (see Annexure A – DEH Map). The proposed VNI West corridor runs parallel to PEC, heading west from Dinawan Substation, until it reaches McLennons Bore Road. It then runs parallel to McLennons Bore Road.

Spark Renewables has been working collaboratively with Transgrid and the DEH landowner over several years to determine the best route for VNI West to pass through the DEH to minimise interactions between the projects and minimise impacts on agricultural activities.

Given that environmental studies for the DEH had already been undertaken when the VNI West corridor was first announced, Spark Renewables made changes to the DEH infrastructure layout and undertook additional survey work to allow for the proposed VNI West corridor. These changes to the DEH are outlined in an amendment report which is available on the NSW Major Projects website:

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/dinawan-wind-farm>

Despite the work undertaken by Spark Renewables and Transgrid, interactions between the two projects are unavoidable. These interactions are outlined below.

4.1 Transmission Line Crossings

The DEH solar farm and BESS 330kV overhead transmission line will need to pass underneath VNI West within the Dinawan Substation land (location A shown in Annexure A – DEH Map). In addition, both the Stage 1 and Stage 2 wind farm 330kV overhead transmission lines will need to pass underneath both PEC and VNI West (location B shown in Annexure A – DEH Map). The Stage 2 wind farm 330kV overhead transmission line will need to pass underneath VNI West again (location C shown in Annexure A – DEH Map) further west.

It is critical that the VNI West design allows for these transmission line crossings. This will likely require:

- VNI West pylons to be located outside of the DEH transmission line corridor.
- Taller VNI West pylons to be utilised at the crossing locations to allow sufficient separation between transmission line conductors.
- VNI West to be micro-sited to the west in crossing location B to allow for DEH transmission line poles between PEC and VNI West.

4.2 Separation between the DEH wind turbine generators (WTGs) and VNI West

Transgrid has required separation of 3 x rotor diameters between the DEH WTGs and VNI West. While Spark Renewables believes that this requirement is overly conservative, and not being achieved at nearby wind farm projects, we have worked with the Transgrid team to achieve it. However, for the separation distance to be achieved, **VNI West will need to be built as far north as possible within the 200m project footprint which is adjacent to McLennons Bore Road.**

4.3 Access roads and concurrent construction of DEH and VNI West

The project footprint presented in the VNI West EIS shows access roads from McLennon Bore Road intersecting with the development footprint of the Dinawan Energy Hub (DEH) near Location B. These intersections occur with key DEH infrastructure, including 330 kV transmission infrastructure, underground reticulation, and DEH access tracks

It is possible that elements of construction of DEH and VNI West will occur concurrently. Due to the overlapping infrastructure footprints, it will be important for Spark Renewables, Transgrid and the relevant construction contractors to work closely together to avoid impacts and ensure safety. **Transgrid should consider the possibility of concurrent construction in the design of access tracks to avoid interactions during construction.**

4. Staging of VNI West

Transgrid recently announced that they will be taking a staged approach to VNI West the first stage being the 500 kV link between Dinawan Substation and Gugaa Substation to support the SW REZ:

<https://www.transgrid.com.au/media-publications/news-articles/staged-delivery-for-nsw-section-of-vni-west-to-optimise-consumer-benefits/>

We note that this staging is not contemplated in the EIS for VNI West and that this should be addressed.

More importantly, the EIS does not include the following infrastructure required to enable the full output (2,500 MVA transfer capacity) of the SW REZ:

- A third 500/330kV transformer at Dinawan Substation; and
- Extension of the 330kV switchyard to the north of the 330kV switchyard to allow for connection of the DEH and nearby Yanco Delta Wind Farm.

The VNI West application should be updated to include this critical SW REZ infrastructure.

Conclusion

Spark Renewables is supportive of Transgrid's VNI West which is essential for unlocking the full capacity of the SW REZ. By addressing the interactions with Spark Renewables' Dinawan Energy Hub (DEH), staging of VNI West and infrastructure required to unlock the full capacity of the SW REZ, Transgrid can ensure the SW REZ achieves its full potential, accelerating consumer benefits from renewable energy integration.

We thank Transgrid for the opportunity to provide this submission and look forward to consulting further with Transgrid.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Will Stone', written in a cursive style.

Will Stone
Head of Development

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Dinawan Energy Hub

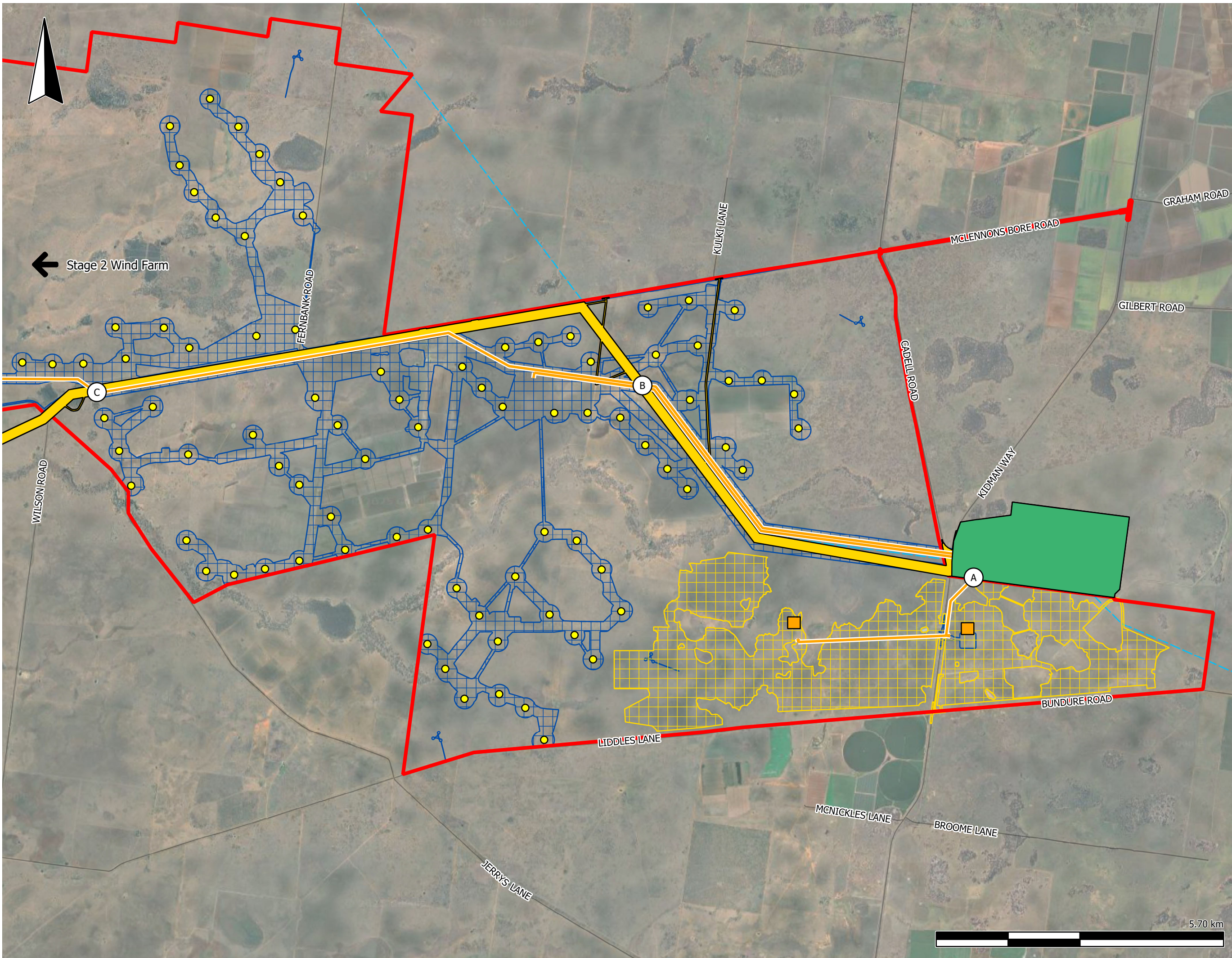
- Project Boundary
- Wind Farm Footprint
- Solar Farm Footprint
- Battery Footprint
- 330kV Transmission Line
- Wind Turbine Generator
- Transmission Crossings

VNI West

- EIS Corridor

Other Infrastructure

- Dinawan Substation
- Project EnergyConnect
- Roads



← Stage 2 Wind Farm

