

VNI West

Cultural Heritage Surveys

FACT SHEET

VNI West is a proposed new 500kV double-circuit transmission line connecting the energy grids of NSW and Victoria. The new line will run from Transgrid's Dinawan substation being built north of Jerilderie to new substations near Kerang and Bulgana in Victoria.

This fact sheet provides information about the cultural heritage surveys Transgrid will be conducting across the Study Area. These surveys are conducted because we are committed to preserving and respecting cultural heritage sites, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.



Cultural Heritage Surveys

Transgrid will be conducting cultural heritage surveys across the project area. This is part of a commitment to preserving and respecting cultural heritage sites, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

Cultural heritage field surveys will help us identify and assess archaeological sites, understand the local environment and identify challenges for consideration during the planning and design of the project.

A combination of public and private land will be investigated as part of the surveys. If access to private land is required, consent will be sought from the landholder prior to entry.

What to expect

Our representatives will work with landholders to understand expectations and requirements before undertaking proposed heritage surveys on private land.

This will include documenting requirements to access the property, as well as the survey area and timing.

Once the necessary approvals are in place, we will schedule the surveys as agreed with the landholder.



How are cultural heritage field surveys conducted?

Field surveys are conducted by Transgrid personnel, archaeologists and representatives from Registered Aboriginal Parties, Traditional Owners and local cultural knowledge holders.

Surveys are typically done on foot, however some driving of 4WD vehicles may be required. Transgrid will work closely with landholders to minimise any disruption to activity on the property.

Based on the nature of each location, the survey team may assess up to six kilometres per day.

The survey will not be repeated, and once complete the team do not return to undertake further recordings.



Common items discovered are Aboriginal stone tools.



Consultation with Registered Aboriginal Parties

As part of the field surveys, Registered Aboriginal Party representatives, Traditional Owners and local cultural knowledge holders will be invited to share their knowledge about cultural heritage values of the area, archaeological and cultural sites, and the overall landscape.

Transgrid's representatives will act in a culturally sensitive manner and treat the information provided with respect.

Site recording

All heritage sites will be documented as part of the surveys. Information collected during the field investigations will include:

- site name, recorder and date
- site type
- GPS coordinates
- landscape and landform character
- site dimensions
- site condition
- site content including numbers and artefact types, raw materials and detailed recording of a sample of artefacts
- photos
- any other relevant information, such as oral information and informant details.



An Aboriginal Scar Tree.

What happens if you find an item of cultural significance?

If anything of significance is discovered, the survey team will record the artefact by taking a photo and making notes, before continuing to survey the remaining areas of the property.

There is no disturbance to the ground or removal of any artefacts. If the find is scattered outside of the survey area, the team may walk further on to record the finding, however it is usually only a few metres and still within the Study Area.

The records are then sent to the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System, which is managed by Heritage NSW.

These records will also be included in an Environmental Impact Statement for the project that is submitted to the Department of Planning and Environment. All personal property or landholder information will be redacted.

If any artefacts of Aboriginal significance are discovered, does that mean someone can claim native title over my land?

No, if any Aboriginal sites or artefacts are discovered on private property, there cannot be a claim of ownership made on that area.

Do I have to stop any activities on my land if anything is found?

If Aboriginal artefacts are found, then a due diligence process will be carried out on that area. However, you will not have to follow the due diligence process if you are already carrying out a defined low impact activity such as the maintenance of roads and tracks, or farm management on land that has been disturbed. This could include cropping, constructing fences, or the continued grazing of animals.



A full list of activities is detailed in the Department Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water document *Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales*.

Transgrid is committed to working with landowners and communities through the construction of VNI West. **Please connect with us if you need any information.**

