



# Victoria to New South Wales Interconnector West (VNI West) Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T) Progress Update

This is the fifth project update for the Victoria to New South Wales Interconnector West (VNI West) Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T) process.

The AEMO Victorian Planning (AVP) and Transgrid project team are currently working towards the publication of the Project Assessment Conclusions Report (PACR) in 2023, based on submissions and feedback received in response to the Project Assessment Draft Report (PADR).

## Australia's Energy Transition

VNI West is a proposed new high-capacity 500 kilovolt (kV) double-circuit overhead transmission line, connecting the Western Renewables Link in Victoria to Energy Connect in New South Wales (NSW). This will help to harness cleaner, low-cost electricity from renewable energy zones (REZs) in both states and unlock the full potential of Snowy Hydro 2.0. Together, these projects will increase network resilience and energy reliability for consumers in those states, increase the sharing of energy and help put downward pressure on electricity bills.

Identified as an actionable project in [AEMO's 2022 Integrated System Plan \(ISP\)](#), VNI West has the backing of state and federal governments, which recognise its pivotal role in providing reliable, secure and affordable electricity as Australia undergoes a once-in-a-century energy transition.

The project is still to complete the RIT-T process. If a project is confirmed through the RIT-T process, it will be subject to the rigorous Commonwealth and State assessments and regulatory approval processes.

## PADR Submissions

In July 2022, AVP and Transgrid published the PADR for VNI West, the second of three reports in the RIT-T process.

AVP and Transgrid have adopted learnings from recent regulatory investment tests, which have reinforced the importance of early, genuine and meaningful engagement with Traditional Owners and all stakeholders, including community and landowner representatives

Feedback from face-to-face and virtual meetings with Traditional Owners, councils, industry and local communities on the PADR has seen 26 written submissions received. Non-confidential submissions are available on the [AEMO](#) website.

## Options Analysis

While feedback on the PADR will be considered in the PACR, one of the key issues identified through the submissions and engagement was the connection of VNI West to Western Renewables Link (WRL) at the proposed terminal station north of Ballarat, Victoria, and its compatibility with land use between Ballarat and Bendigo.

In response, AVP and Transgrid are embarking on an investigation of alternative VNI West options, still running via a terminal station near Kerang, but with connection to WRL west of the currently proposed terminal station,



including areas around Bulgana (Wotjobaluk Country) and Waubra/Lexton (Djaara Country). As part of this investigation, AVP is undertaking targeted consultation with Traditional Owners and stakeholders to collect local insights that will help inform the assessment of these as credible options.

Our analysis of potential alternative options is not complete, and no decision has been made to change the currently proposed location for connection to WRL. Any changes to the configuration of WRL may have potential implications for the timing and scope of the WRL Environmental Effects Statement.

AVP and Transgrid are very appreciative of the thorough and thoughtful submissions provided in relation to the PADR for VNI West and will continue to communicate regularly and openly with Traditional Owners, communities, and stakeholders on the progress of this work.

## Want more information?

The PADR and further information are available from AVP and Transgrid through the contact details below.

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