

VNI West

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Biodiversity Impact Assessment

FACT SHEET | FEBRUARY 2025

VNI West is a proposed 500kV double-circuit transmission line connecting the energy grids of NSW and Victoria. As part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) being prepared, a detailed assessment will be undertaken on the potential landscape character and visual amenity impacts during construction and operation of the project.



What is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment?

One of the assessment areas of the EIS is the potential impacts to biodiversity from construction and operation of the project.

This assessment is supported by extensive field work and considers both direct impacts, such as habitat and flora that would be temporarily or permanently cleared for construction, operation and maintenance, as well as indirect impacts, such as noise, dust, or the potential transport of weeds.



What have we heard so far?

In feedback provided to date, community members have expressed concerns about the potential for impact to protected habitats, National Parks and State Forests and endangered flora and fauna, such as:

- Plains Wanderer
- Southern Bell Frog
- Australasian Bittern
- Bush Stone-curlew
- Natural Grasslands of the Murray Valley Plans
- Seasonal Herbaceous Wetlands
- Temperate Lowland Plains
- Weeping Myall Woodlands.
- Painted Snipe
- Superb Parrot

Feedback has also highlighted the importance of considering the movement of species prompted by environmental changes as well as the need for local regeneration to replace impacted habitats.



Image: Southern Bell Frog located during surveys at the Edward River in March 2024.



Assessing biodiversity

The biodiversity impact assessment will evaluate the potential impacts to biodiversity from construction and operation of the project.

The assessment will detail the extensive field ecology investigations that are being undertaken to identify flora and fauna species and plant community types along the transmission line corridor, including any threatened species that need to be avoided.

The assessment involves:

- reviewing data and reports relevant to existing vegetation and threatened flora and fauna
- mapping existing native vegetation and flora
- carrying out field surveys to verify vegetation communities, assess threatened flora and fauna habitats, survey for presence of threatened species, and assess and survey bushfire affected lands
- assessing aquatic habitat condition and suitability for threatened aquatic species
- assessing potential direct, indirect, prescribed and serious and irreversible impacts
- identifying management and mitigation measures to address potential impacts and determining the need for offset requirements to address any residual impacts.

During EIS development, where we are unable to complete a survey due to restricted or unsafe access conditions, the project will assume threatened flora and fauna species to be present based on other publicly available information until further investigations can be completed.

Direct impacts

Areas of land that would be temporarily or permanently cleared for construction, operation and maintenance are defined as having a direct impact on biodiversity.

Indirect impacts

Areas impacted by noise, dust, light or the potential transport of weeds are defined as having an indirect impact on biodiversity.

Prescribed impacts

Prescribed impacts are those that have an impact in addition to, or instead of, direct and indirect impacts and might include things like disruption to habitat connectivity.

Managing and avoiding impacts to biodiversity

Biodiversity impacts may occur when clearing the area during construction, or during operation of the proposed transmission line, substations and associated temporary or permanent infrastructure.

During detailed design and construction planning, biodiversity impacts will be avoided where practicable with priority given to avoiding recorded threatened species and their habitat.

The field surveys data gathered to date will help Transgrid refine and identify a final construction footprint and, ultimately, the 70-metre-wide easement for the transmission line infrastructure. The aim is to avoid or minimise as many impacts to protected biodiversity matters as possible, with priority given to avoiding recorded threatened species and their habitat.

A Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) will be prepared as part of the project's Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). This plan will include processes to implement, evaluate and report on mitigation measures for biodiversity impacts during construction.



Image: Microbat located during surveys at the Wakool River in March 2024.

Connect with us

Transgrid is committed to working with landowners and communities through the development of VNI West.

Please connect with us for more information.



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