



TransGrid

EnergyConnect (NSW-Western Section)

Community Guide to the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

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This document is a community guide to the EnergyConnect (NSW-Western Section) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS assesses environmental issues including biodiversity, cultural heritage and visual amenity. Strategies to avoid, mitigate and manage potential impacts have also been identified in the EIS.

To view the EIS, please visit the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) website: <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/25821>

About the project

Supporting changes in the National Electricity Market.

The Australian energy landscape is undergoing significant change with increased focus on new sources of energy generation. To support this change and growth in the energy market, TransGrid has partnered with ElectraNet (South Australia's electricity transmission operator) to deliver one of the nation's largest energy infrastructure projects, EnergyConnect.

Why is EnergyConnect needed?

A number of contributing factors are driving the evolution of the energy market to low-emission renewable energy, including:

- > access to new generation sources as coal-fired plants close
- > government commitments to reduce carbon emissions
- > the potential for renewable generation to reduce energy prices
- > demand for a more reliable energy supply.

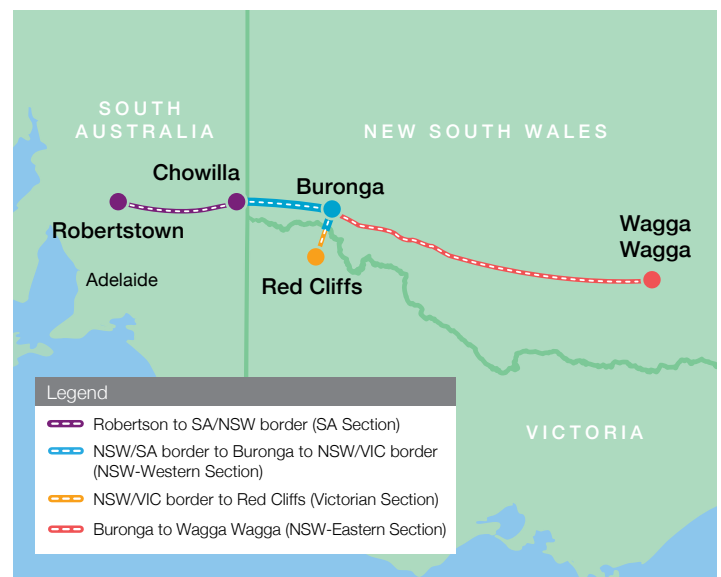
EnergyConnect will deliver the infrastructure required to support this transition by connecting the energy grids of NSW, SA and Victoria and enabling Australian communities and businesses to access new lower-cost energy sources.

What does the project involve?

The NSW section of EnergyConnect is being delivered by TransGrid and was declared *Critical State Significant Infrastructure* by the NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. The project will be progressed through the environmental and planning approvals process in two stages:

- > **NSW-Western Section** from the NSW/SA border to Buronga through to the NSW/Vic border
- > **NSW-Eastern Section** from Buronga to Wagga Wagga.

Information on the status of these sections within the environmental and planning process, including relevant documentation is available online at the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's (DPIE) Planning Portal by searching "EnergyConnect" at www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects.



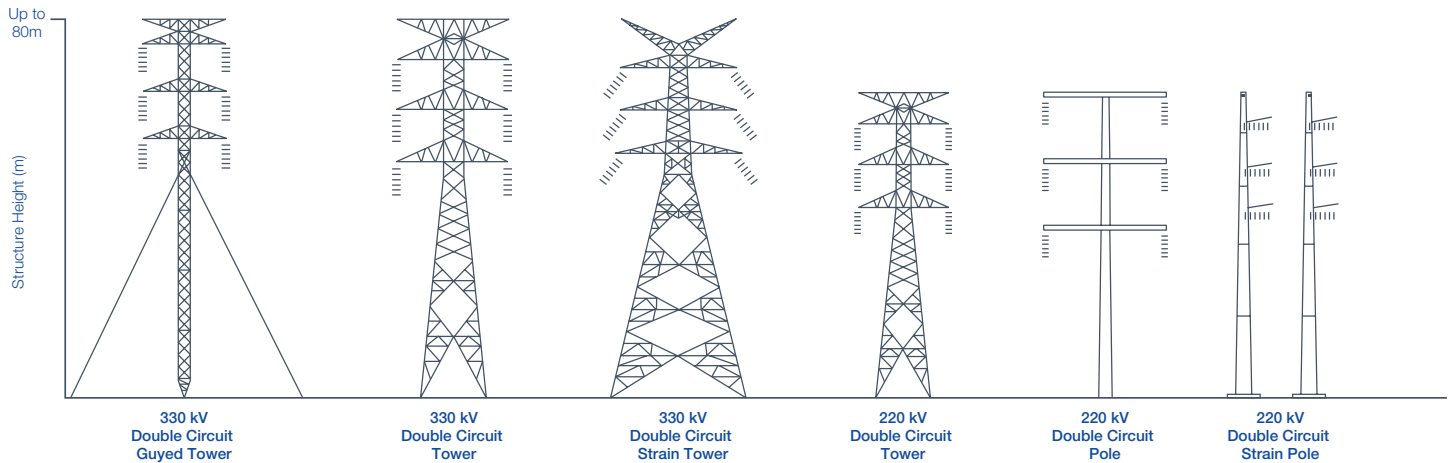
Proposed infrastructure

Transmission line and structures

The NSW-Western Section proposal includes around **160km** of transmission line. This includes:

- > construction of around **135km** of 330kV double circuit line from the NSW/SA border near Chowilla to the existing Buronga substation.
- > upgrade of around **22km** of the existing 220kV single circuit line from the existing Buronga substation to the NSW/Vic border near Monak to be a 220kV double circuit line.

The transmission line would be supported on a series of towers, typically spaced between **400m** and **600m** apart. The towers would range in height from **30m** to **80m**, depending on local conditions.



Proposed concept design for transmission line structures that may be used for the project. Figure not to scale.

Substation upgrade and expansion

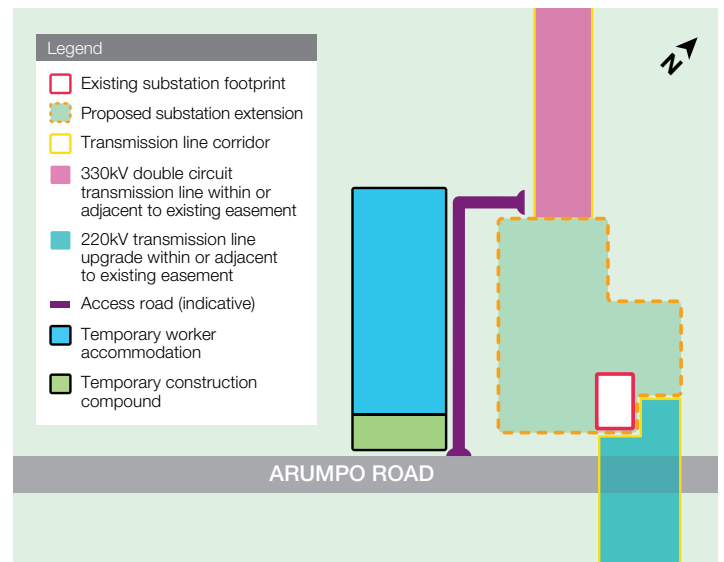
The existing Buronga substation is proposed to be upgraded and expanded to accommodate the new 330kV line from the west and the proposed NSW-Eastern Section of EnergyConnect.

The additional area required for the expansion is around **33.5ha**. The maximum height of new equipment is around **65m**.

Additional safety measures will be in place, including:

- > security fencing and public information signage
- > operational lighting
- > an asset protection zone, which is an area around the substation maintained and cleared of all trees and vegetation.

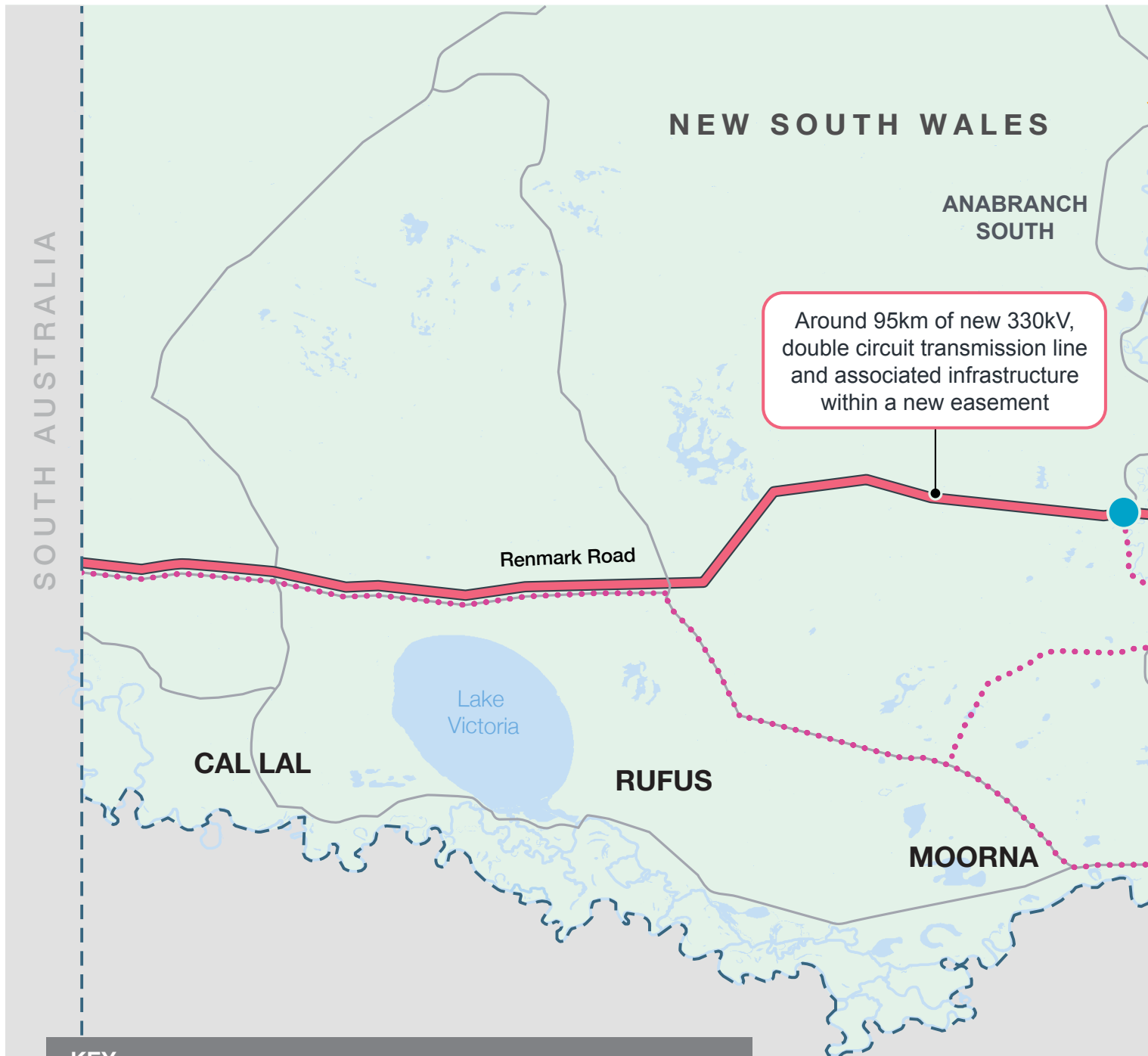
Additional parking bays and access points (entry and exit) are also proposed.











Temporary and/or ancillary infrastructure

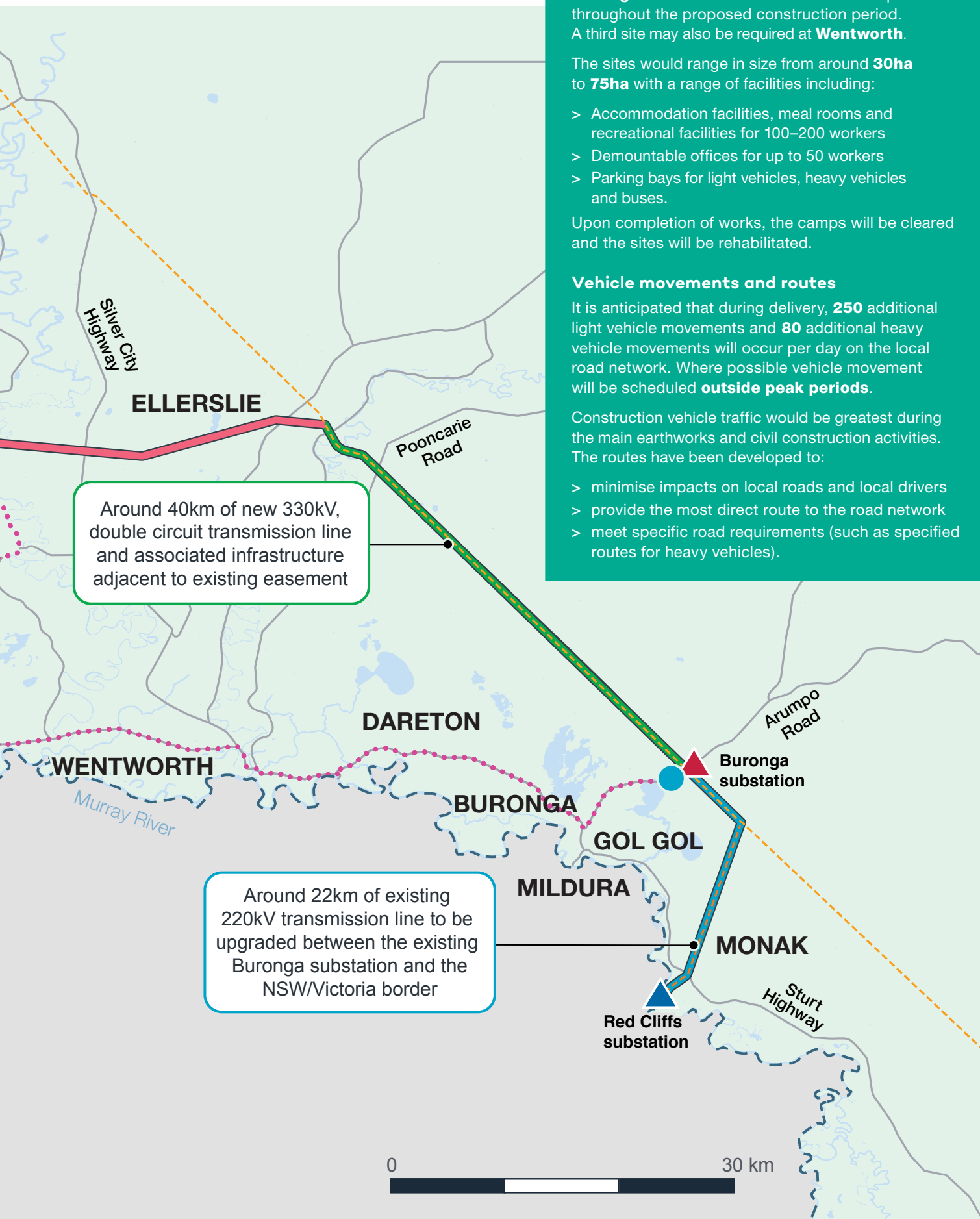
In addition to the transmission line and substation, access roads will also be built or upgraded as required. Other ancillary works required for the construction of the transmission line and substation, can include laydown and staging areas, concrete batching plants, brake/winch sites, site offices and accommodation camps.

Map of NSW-Western Section



KEY:

 330kV double circuit transmission line within a new easement	 Existing transmission line infrastructure
 330kV double circuit transmission line adjacent to existing easement	 Local haulage routes
 220kV transmission line upgrade adjacent to existing transmission line	 Buronga substation
	 Red Cliffs substation
	 Temporary construction compound and worker accommodation



Worker accommodation and site offices

Temporary accommodation camps will be set up in **Buronga** and **Anabran South** and be in place throughout the proposed construction period. A third site may also be required at **Wentworth**.

The sites would range in size from around **30ha** to **75ha** with a range of facilities including:

- > Accommodation facilities, meal rooms and recreational facilities for 100–200 workers
- > Demountable offices for up to 50 workers
- > Parking bays for light vehicles, heavy vehicles and buses.

Upon completion of works, the camps will be cleared and the sites will be rehabilitated.

Vehicle movements and routes

It is anticipated that during delivery, **250** additional light vehicle movements and **80** additional heavy vehicle movements will occur per day on the local road network. Where possible vehicle movement will be scheduled **outside peak periods**.

Construction vehicle traffic would be greatest during the main earthworks and civil construction activities. The routes have been developed to:

- > minimise impacts on local roads and local drivers
- > provide the most direct route to the road network
- > meet specific road requirements (such as specified routes for heavy vehicles).

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Under the NSW *Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act), all Critical State Significant Infrastructure must go through a comprehensive assessment process, which includes the development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

NSW-Western Section EIS

The EIS is informed by a number of studies on specific environmental, economic and social considerations. These studies identify potential impacts to the environment and communities, and propose management measures to avoid or minimise these impacts. Assessment outcomes detailed in the EIS include:

Biodiversity

The outcomes of ecology surveys carried out across the proposal area and spanning the Murray Darling Depression, Darling Riverine Plains and Riverine bioregions is detailed in Chapter 9 of the EIS. The analysis of these surveys found that the NSW-Western Section would impact, to some extent, 59 threatened species, migratory birds or their habitat, however it is unlikely that this will be significant. Measures to minimise and manage potential impacts include designing the project to avoid areas with high biodiversity value including threatened species' habitats, establishing biodiversity stewardship sites and alternative strategic offset outcomes.

Cultural heritage

Chapters 10 and 11 detail the Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal heritage sites identified within the project area. In addition to previously recorded sites, 131 previously unrecorded Aboriginal site features were uncovered during field surveys, with the highest density and variety found north of Lake Victoria. An additional unrecorded non-Aboriginal heritage item was identified, a survey marker tree, west of the Darling River near Sturts Billabong. No items of State, Commonwealth or World Heritage significance were identified. Management measures to protect these sites have been developed, with the transmission line route aiming to protect, conserve and manage the significance of Aboriginal objects and culture, and Non-Aboriginal heritage. Strict protocols will be in place to manage any unexpected items found during the construction period.

Land use and property

Potential land use and property impacts resulting from the project, including those related to agriculture, were assessed and can be found in Chapter 12 of the EIS. Most of the land in the proposed project area is leased as grazing land, with only a small portion classified as freehold. There are also several areas of Crown Land within and surrounding the proposal study area. Management measures are also detailed in this chapter and include extensive consultation with landowners to minimise disruption to their operations.

Landscape character and visual amenity

The assessment of local landscape features and visual amenity considers national, state and local government policies and guidelines, which are outlined in Chapter 13. Approaches to avoid and minimise landscape and visual impacts were considered as part of the transmission line location by distancing the alignment north of Mildura, Wentworth and Lake Victoria. Impacts to private properties near the transmission lines would be minimised by maximising the spacing of transmission line structures or with screening in an effort to reduce disruption to views.

Social and economic

Details of the social and economic impacts and benefits of the project are detailed in Chapter 14. Way of life, community, culture and access to and use of infrastructure, services and facilities were some of the categories covered in the study. Measures to manage and reduce potential impacts include consultation with stakeholders, such as landholders, Local Government and emergency service providers to identify ways to minimise impacts to property operations and local activity. The assessment also identified possible project benefits including long-term economic gain to the broader regional population.

Traffic and access

Chapter 18 outlines the expected impact the project will have on traffic and the local road network. An increase of less than 2% from current traffic volume at peak periods is anticipated, with up to 250 additional light vehicle movements and 80 additional heavy vehicle activities per day. This is not expected to adversely impact the capacity and serviceability of the local road network. A Construction Traffic Management Plan will be prepared to manage vehicle movements.

Additional areas of assessment

Additional factors that are detailed in the EIS include:

- > Hydrology, flooding and water quality (Ch 15)
- > Air quality (Ch 16)
- > Noise and vibration (Ch 17)
- > Hazards and risks (Ch 19)
- > Soils, contamination and groundwater (Ch 20)
- > Waste management and resource use (Ch 21)
- > Cumulative impacts (Ch 22)

Consultation

TransGrid has been consulting extensively with the community, local businesses, government agencies and other stakeholders to inform the route of the transmission line and the development of the EIS.

890+ engagement activities including with community members and businesses since November 2018

494 face to face meetings, emails and phone calls with local landowners

310 briefings and updates to local council, government agencies and other key stakeholders.

TransGrid will continue to work closely with stakeholders to understand any issues of concern.

Where to view the EIS

The EIS is on public exhibition in late 2020 and can be viewed:

- > **Online at the DPIE website:**
www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/25821
- > **Through an interactive portal:**
www.transgrid.com.au/energyconnect
- > At a community information session, where you can also meet the EnergyConnect project team and ask questions about the project or the EIS.

You can also contact the project team to discuss the EIS by:

Phone: 1800 49 06 66

Email: pec@transgrid.com.au

How to make a submission

Making a submission is an important part of the EIS process and TransGrid encourages all community members, stakeholders and government agencies to have their say on the EIS. DPIE must receive your submission before the close of the exhibition period and include:

1. Your name and address
2. The application name: EnergyConnect (NSW-Western Section)
3. The application number: SSI-10040
4. A brief statement on whether you support or object to the proposal
5. The reasons why you support or object to the proposal

It is DPIE's policy to place a copy of your submission on its website. If you do not want your personal information made public, please state this clearly at the top of your submission.

Mark your submission for the attention of Director – Energy Assessments and send it via the:

- > **DPIE website:**
www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/25821
- > **Post:**
Major Projects Assessment Department of Planning,
Industry and Environment
GPO Box 39, SYDNEY, NSW 2001
- > **In person:**
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
at 320 Pitt Street, Sydney
- > **Phone:**
1300 305 695

Your feedback matters

Following exhibition of the EIS, feedback will be summarised in a submissions report, which will be made publicly available. TransGrid will consider all feedback and provide a response. The Minister for Planning and Public Places will then make a decision about whether to approve the proposal.

Disclosure

Anyone lodging submissions must declare reportable political donations (including donations of \$1,000 or more) made in the previous two years. For more details, and a disclosure form, go to www.planning.nsw.gov.au/donations

Privacy

Under section 1152(5) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979* (NSW), the Director-General may provide copies of submissions received during the exhibition period, or a summary of the submissions, to TransGrid. All submissions and information obtained during the public exhibition period will be used in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988. All submissions received will be regarded as public documents and any information contained in them can be published in subsequent assessment documents.

Copies of the submissions received on the project may be issue to interested parties. If the author of a submission does not wish the information to be distributed, this needs to be clearly stated in the submission. For enquiries, please contact DPIE:

Phone: 1300 305 695 **Email:** information@planning.nsw.gov.au

Connect
with us

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