

# Project update

Welcome to the Western Renewables Link November 2023 project update. In this update you can learn more about the project's Environment Effects Statement Technical Reference Group, recent community information sessions, landholder compensation and western Victoria's Golden Sun Moth.

## Recent project activities - November 2023

Throughout November we've heard from and spoken with community members at shopping centre pop-ups and webinars. A range of topics were covered and you can find answers to the Frequently Asked Questions below.

Our [webinar](#) and video [transcripts](#) are uploaded to our website's [Resources section](#). If you missed our sessions, you can contact us anytime by emailing us at [info@westernrenewableslink.com.au](mailto:info@westernrenewableslink.com.au) or calling on 1300 360 795.

We have also recently published the following new community resources on our website:

- [Landholder compensation and payments fact sheet](#)
- [Option for easement video](#)
- [Community webinar transcript](#)
- [Community webinar video](#)

## Meet the Technical Reference Group

The proposed Western Renewables Link project is subject to an [Environment Effects Statement](#) (EES), an environmental impact assessment process administered by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) on behalf of Victoria's Minister for Planning.

A critical part in preparing the EES is working with subject matter experts and representatives from organisations that form the Technical Reference Group (TRG). DTP invites organisations to be represented on the TRG because they have a statutory approvals responsibility relative to the project or because they are public authorities or agencies with technical expertise in relevant topics.

The project's TRG provide advice to AusNet as the proponent and the Victorian Government throughout the preparation of the EES. The group is responsible for reviewing the individual technical reports and the EES main report, that examine the Western Renewables Link's potential environmental impacts, before the EES is submitted to the Minister for Planning.



Technical Reference Group members visiting Bulgana Terminal Station

AusNet recently hosted a tour for the TRG across sections of the proposed project route to enable members to visit and discuss onsite the areas of proposed works and meet representatives of the local community.

The TRG includes members from the following organisations:

- Department of Transport and Planning
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- Agriculture Victoria
- Country Fire Authority
- Environment Protection Authority Victoria
- Parks Victoria
- Relevant local Councils
- Catchment Management Authorities
- Registered Aboriginal Parties

The full list of the [Technical Reference Group members](#) is available on [our website](#).

## Western Victoria's Golden Sun Moth

The vulnerable Golden Sun Moth is found in parts of western Victoria. This is one of the many flora and fauna species we have identified through our ongoing field surveys.

Did you know that the Golden Sun Moth lives and feeds in native grassland, particularly wallaby grass? They spend most of their life cycle as larvae underground and emerge to breed as a moth during breeding season which is between October to January.

We are continuing to assess the **biodiversity impacts** of the Western Renewables Link and will share our findings with the public through the **Environment Effects Statement** which we expect to be available for the public to view in 2024.



Golden Sun Moth

## Landholder compensation and payments

A range of payments and compensation are available for landholders who will host transmission line easements for the Western Renewables Link project.

Our team has been meeting with landholders and are in the process of providing compensation offers, in the form of an Option for Easement proposal, to landholders on the current proposed route for the project.

If the Western Renewables Link project does not achieve the required approvals, these compensation agreements will either terminate in accordance with the deed or expire at the end of the specified time period. Landholders will retain any payments already made.

More information is available in our [Landholder compensation and payments fact sheet](#) and [video](#).

## Frequently Asked Questions

Throughout October and November, we've been having conversations with community members across the proposed project route at agricultural field days, shopping centre pop-up stands, webinars and community information sessions.

**Here are a few of the most common questions and answers.**

### Why is this project needed?

As we transition from coal, a new **transmission line** is required to transport renewable energy from wind and solar farms in western Victoria, a key **renewable energy zone**, to homes and businesses across the state and into the National Electricity Market. This **project** is urgently needed to reduce congestion on the existing transmission network, which will unlock more clean energy and help put downward pressure on electricity prices.

### How has the proposed route been selected?

The **proposed route** has been identified based on landholder, community and stakeholder input, impact assessments, technical investigations and constructability. We are continuing to work with landholders and stakeholders to respond to their feedback on the proposed route, tower siting and access track locations. So far we have made more than 95 changes to the proposed route, and over 4,500 individual tower moves, based on feedback from landholders, community and technical specialists.

The proposed route for the Western Renewables Link will not be finalised until the Minister for Planning completes their assessment of the Environment Effects Statement and any matters raised by the Minister are addressed.

For more information on the proposed route, you can view our [interactive map](#).

### Can farming continue with transmission lines?

We understand that agriculture and associated industries are critically important to communities along the proposed route. There will be some agricultural impacts and activities that will be restricted within the easement, however farmers safely operate on existing easements across our 6,500km network of transmission lines in Victoria, including irrigated horticulture, broadacre crops and grazing.

As a result of feedback, we have designed the proposed Western Renewables Link 500kV transmission line with a higher minimum ground clearance of 15m. This will allow vehicles and equipment up to 5m in height to travel and operate under the lines. In addition, vehicles and equipment with a height of between 5 and 8.6m may be permitted to travel and operate under the Western Renewables Link subject to an AusNet safety assessment.

The equipment for potato farming will largely be able to be accommodated. However, rain gun irrigators are not permitted to be used within a transmission line easement, and there are [height restrictions on vehicles and equipment under the transmission line](#).

### About the project

The Western Renewables Link is a proposed new 190km overhead high-voltage electricity transmission line that will carry renewable energy from Bulgana in western Victoria to Sydenham in Melbourne's north-west.

The project is critical infrastructure required to unlock the renewable energy potential of western Victoria as a key Renewable Energy Zone and will help deliver clean and affordable energy to all Victorians.

For more information about the project, visit our [website](#).

### More information

Visit the project website [www.westernrenewableslink.com.au](http://www.westernrenewableslink.com.au) for the latest project information.

### Contact us

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