

# Amenity and Safety

The Environment Effects Statement (EES) and the draft Planning Scheme Amendment for the Western Renewables Link are now available for public comment. Electromagnetic interference (EMI) and electric and magnetic fields (EMF), noise and vibration, bushfire and air quality are key topics covered in the EES.



This fact sheet has been developed as part of a suite to help you navigate the Western Renewables Link EES and connect you with the information that matters to you.

It provides details on how potential impacts on **amenity and safety** have been considered and where to find more information in the EES.

## Planning and approvals

The EES includes information on how the project could affect the environment during construction, operation and decommissioning, and how any adverse impacts could be managed. It helps decision-makers determine whether the project should be approved under Commonwealth and Victorian laws and what conditions should apply.

The EES for the Western Renewables Link has involved extensive technical studies including field surveys and investigations, along with Traditional Owner, landholder, community and stakeholder consultation. It includes 20 technical reports on the topics listed on the final page of this fact sheet.

The EES and the draft Planning Scheme Amendment, which allows for the project land use and development to proceed, can be viewed in full on the WRL website at [westernrenewableslink.com.au/ees](https://westernrenewableslink.com.au/ees)



**The Western Renewables Link will unlock Victoria's renewable energy generation potential and play a key role in facilitating access to clean, reliable, and affordable energy.**

The Western Renewables Link is a proposed high-voltage, double-circuit overhead electricity transmission line, extending over 190 kilometres from Bulgana in western Victoria to Sydenham in Melbourne's north-west. The project will connect significant renewable energy developments within the Western Victoria Renewable Energy Zone to the grid and establish a direct link between the New South Wales and Victorian electricity networks.

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# Air Quality

Air quality impacts occur when pollutants from the project such as dust, exhaust fumes, smells, and other airborne hazards from construction and operation are released into the air and affect residential areas or places where people spend time.

## What was investigated?

Air quality specialists assessed potential air quality impacts and identified measures to avoid, minimise or manage potential impacts during construction, operation and decommissioning stages of the project.

An assessment of local meteorological conditions was undertaken and impacts associated with dust generation, exhaust emissions from plant and equipment, and odours and airborne hazards from the handling of potentially contaminated materials and groundwater were assessed.

## Investigations included:

- a review of publicly available information to characterise the existing background air quality within the area, existing local sources of emissions to air, land uses and sensitive receptors, topography and meteorology
- analysis of aerial imagery and maps to identify land uses and sensitive receptors

- analysis of local topography and prevailing weather conditions using data from Bureau of Meteorology stations operated at Stawell, Pyrenees, Ballarat and Melbourne Airport
- assessment in accordance with EPA guidelines for assessing nuisance dust and minimising air pollution.

## Managing potential impacts

Construction activities that may produce dust and other air quality impacts include the digging, transporting, storing and placing of soil, as well as construction traffic, and erosion of exposed surfaces like unsealed access tracks. Dust could cause minor issues at residential properties or places where people spend time, but these impacts are likely to be short-term and non-harmful to human health.

If unexpected contaminated soil or groundwater is uncovered, it may cause odours, which will be managed in line with required plans.

Dust-related impacts during operation are expected to be low as they will be occasional, short-term, and remain non-harmful to human health.



This fact sheet outlines potential EES topics you may wish to explore further, but submissions should not be based on this information. Please refer to the more detailed information on Air Quality in **EES Chapter 18** and **Technical Report I**, and base submissions on the material provided there.



## Examples of how we plan to manage potential impacts:



Watering, sealing, and revegetating exposed and disturbed areas



Modifying the intensity of activities based on observed dust levels and weather conditions



Measuring and monitoring air quality during construction



Following requirements for the removal and disposal of contaminated and hazardous materials



Implementing industry standard measures to control impacts, such as odour suppressing agents





# Bushfire

Much of the landscape surrounding the project is classified as bushfire-prone. While bushfire risk in the region will remain high due to environmental conditions, the project is not expected to significantly increase that risk with planned design, construction, and operational controls in place.

## What was investigated?

Potential bushfire-related impacts from the project were assessed and measures to avoid, minimise and mitigate potential impacts were identified by a bushfire specialist. The specialist determined the existing bushfire conditions, bushfire ignition risks, fire history and bushfire management arrangements in the area. These aspects were then assessed for potential impacts across all stages of the project and included consideration of on-site bushfire ignition, off-site bushfire ignition, fire suppression, bushfire fuel management and access and egress for community in the event of a bushfire.

## Investigations included:

- a desktop review of existing bushfire planning zones and overlays, bushfire-prone areas, vegetation data, climate records and fire history

- analysis of satellite imagery to identify farm dams and other potential sources of water supplies in case of fire
- identification and assessment of values and land uses potentially affected by bushfire
- bushfire behaviour modelling at key locations to understand the influence of topography, landform, vegetation and fire weather on the intensity and spread of bushfires at key locations.

## Managing potential impacts

In accordance with the *Electricity Safety Act 1998* (Vic), the project will operate under an Electricity Safety Management Scheme, approved by Energy Safe Victoria, along with required Bushfire Mitigation and Vegetation Management Plans. These plans provide for safe operation, maintenance of vegetation clearances, and management of fire risks.

Overall, the project is being carefully planned to minimise bushfire-related risks through design, regulation compliance, and close coordination with emergency services.



This fact sheet outlines potential EES topics you may wish to explore further, but submissions should not be based on this information. Please refer to the more detailed information on Bushfire in **EES Chapter 13** and **Technical Report K**, and base submissions on the material provided there.



## Examples of how we plan to manage potential impacts:



### Design and safety measures

The project includes several features aimed at preventing bushfire ignition, including lightning protection and structural designs for towers and overhead lines aligned with Australian standards. These measures reduce the risk of infrastructure failure during extreme weather events.



### Construction phase controls

During construction, activities such as hot works and fuel storage will be carefully managed under a Project Construction Bushfire Management Plan. A separate plan will be prepared for the workforce accommodation facilities. These plans include requirements for water supply, vegetation management, and coordination with local councils and fire authorities to ensure safe access and emergency response routes.



### Impact on fire control lines

The proposed route intersects some strategic fire control lines and fuel breaks identified in local fire management plans. While rare, infrastructure failure could impact fire response efforts. However, the design places towers away from roads and critical access routes, significantly reducing obstruction risks.



# Electromagnetic Interference (EMI) and Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF)

Electric and magnetic fields (EMF) are invisible areas of energy produced by electrical equipment, including powerlines. Electromagnetic interference (EMI) refers to the potential for these fields to affect nearby electronic devices. EMF impacts may occur where the project adds to existing levels of electromagnetic fields and causes them to go over the targeted level in sensitive areas.

## What was investigated?

A technical specialist assessed potential impacts of the project on EMI and EMF levels and measures to avoid, minimise or manage potential impacts were identified. Specialists considered field measurements of EMI and EMF, sensitive receptors, and design information to calculate worst case levels generated from the project.

## Investigations included:

- a desktop review to determine sensitive receptors and existing EMI and EMF conditions including existing sources
- field investigations and targeted site inspections/walkovers to measure existing EMI and EMF levels in the area
- review of design information to calculate levels.

## Managing potential impacts

The project is designed with standard controls to keep EMF levels within safe limits directly under the line, avoiding risks to human and animal health. It also aims to maximise the distance from sensitive areas, such as medical and research equipment, through route and terminal site selection. A thorough EMI and EMF verification assessment will inform the final design by identifying sensitive areas and considering future developments in the study area.

There is a possibility that the project's infrastructure could cause EMI that may temporarily affect Differential GPS (DGPS) signals used for land navigation directly under the transmission line during heavy rain. For example, a farmer using DGPS to guide a tractor might notice a short delay or reduced accuracy in positioning if they're directly under the line during a storm. However, these potential impacts are short-lived. Once the equipment moves away from the line the DGPS will correct itself.

All other remaining EMI and EMF impacts are minor to negligible. Most issues have been avoided through design, such as avoiding sensitive medical and research facilities, or reduced to meet or are below relevant standards. This means there will be little to no interference with radio, TV, emergency services broadcasts, point-to-point radio, or mobile signals.



This fact sheet outlines potential EES topics you may wish to explore further, but submissions should not be based on this information. Please refer to the more detailed information on EMI and EMF in **EES Chapter 17** and **Technical Report L**, and base submissions on the material provided there.



## Examples of how we plan to manage potential impacts:



Maximising separation from sensitive locations (e.g. sensitive medical and research equipment) through route selection and terminal station site selection



Verify impacts at detailed design, and implement any relevant mitigations as required



# Noise and Vibration

## What was investigated?

Noise and vibration specialists assessed potential noise and vibration impacts during construction, operation and decommissioning stages of the project.

## Investigations included:

- identifying sensitive receivers based on known residential dwelling locations and non-residential locations such as schools and hospitals
- conducting both unattended and short-term noise monitoring at key locations to establish the existing noise environment
- modelling to predict noise levels at sensitive receivers arising from typical construction activities and operational noise generated at the transmission lines and terminal stations
- assessing the potential noise and vibration impacts to sensitive receivers and identification of mitigations.

## Managing potential impacts

Potential noise and vibration impacts during construction, operation, and decommissioning will be temporary and can be managed using mitigation measures to protect community health and amenity.

Construction noise and vibration will be minimised as much as possible by applying

measures consistent with Environment Protection Authority (EPA) guidelines. These include selecting the quietest available equipment or processes, shielding noisy activities and scheduling works during less sensitive periods. Construction outside of normal working hours will be minimised unless unavoidable.

At times there will be some construction noise that can be heard, such as when transmission lines are strung or towers are built using helicopters as there are limited practical measures to reduce the noise and vibration of these activities.

Construction noise impacts on sensitive locations such as schools, hospitals and homes will be minor as it will be limited to periods of days or weeks near the towers and transmission line. While construction will extend over months at the terminal stations, the associated noise and vibration is expected to be similar to the existing background noise and vibration in the area.

During operation, noise from equipment at the new and upgraded terminal stations and along the transmission line will comply with EPA standards for acceptable noise levels. Occasionally, noise from the transmission lines may be louder than background levels due to certain weather conditions and maintenance work. The impact from maintenance work will be minor as it will be infrequent and minimised as much as possible using quieter equipment.



This fact sheet outlines potential EES topics you may wish to explore further, but submissions should not be based on this information. Please refer to the more detailed information on Noise and Vibration in **EES Chapter 19** and **Technical Report O**, and base submissions on the material provided there.



## Examples of how we plan to manage potential impacts:



Minimising noise and vibration through design



Using quieter equipment for maintenance activities, such as drones, where possible



Selecting the quietest available best practice equipment or processes



Scheduling works during less sensitive periods





### Making a submission

Planning Panels Victoria (PPV) manages the EES public exhibition process.

Submissions must be made in writing and received by the exhibition closing date via the Engage Victoria website which is the Victorian Government's centralised online consultation platform [engage.vic.gov.au/Western-Renewables-Link-IAC](https://engage.vic.gov.au/Western-Renewables-Link-IAC). Submissions will be considered by the independent Inquiry and Advisory Committee (IAC) and the Minister for Planning.

Only one submission is needed to address all your views about the project, its effects, and the relevant documents.

If you do not have internet access and are unable to lodge a submission online via the Engage Victoria website, please contact PPV through the Customer Call Centre on 136 186 (select option 6) and request a hard copy submission coversheet. Each hard copy submission must be accompanied by a completed coversheet issued by PPV.

All submissions must state the name and address of the person making the submission. Submissions will be treated as public documents and will be published on the Engage Victoria website. Do not include personal information in the body of your submission (such as your email address or phone number or photos of people, particularly children).

If you would like to present your submission in person to the IAC, you will need to make a submission and mark on the submission form that you would like to be heard.

For more information about the EES submission process or any enquiries regarding the IAC process, contact PPV on 136 186 (select option 6) or email [planning.panels@transport.vic.gov.au](mailto:planning.panels@transport.vic.gov.au)






## Key topics in the EES

						
Amenity and Safety	Biodiversity and Environment	Community and Land Use	Heritage	Land and Water	Landscape and Visual	Transport and Aviation
Air Quality	Biodiversity	Agriculture and Forestry	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage	Contaminated Land	Landscape and Visual	Aviation
Bushfire	Climate Change	Economic	Historical Heritage	Geology and Soils		Transport
EMI and EMF	Greenhouse Gas	Land Use and Planning		Groundwater		
Noise and Vibration		Social		Surface Water		

### More information

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

### Contact us

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