

Draft Planning Scheme Amendment

The purpose of this document is to provide landholders, the community and stakeholders (including councils, agencies, businesses and First Nations peoples) with information about the proposed primary planning approval process for the Western Renewables Link, which is a planning scheme amendment. It also provides links to further information on planning processes in Victoria and the Western Renewables Link Environment Effects Statement process.

What is a planning scheme?

A planning scheme is a statutory document that sets out objectives, policies and provisions for land use in a defined area (most commonly a single municipality). A planning scheme regulates the use, development and protection of land through planning provisions, made up of ordinance (written rules) and maps showing where zones and overlays apply.

What is a planning scheme amendment?

Changes to a planning scheme are called amendments. An amendment can include a change to a planning scheme map or a change to the ordinance (the written rules), or both. The processes for amending a planning scheme are set out in the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic).

Is this the same as a planning permit?

A planning permit process is the most common way to facilitate planning approval for specific land uses and development. Other processes are available for complex projects that cross multiple planning schemes and trigger many permit requirements. Most infrastructure projects that require both an Environment Effects Statement (EES) and planning approval (as is the case for the Western Renewables Link) follow a planning scheme amendment process rather than a planning permit process.

What is proposed for the Western Renewables Link?

A planning scheme amendment is proposed as the primary planning approval for the Western Renewables Link. AusNet intends to request the Victorian Minister for Planning (the Minister) to amend the Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Ballarat, Hepburn, Moorabool and Melton planning schemes, through a single amendment to all six planning schemes.



The draft planning scheme amendment will propose to:

1. Apply a Specific Controls Overlay to the land parcels affected by the proposed project route and associated areas required for construction and operation, such as access tracks and temporary construction areas.
2. Insert an incorporated document that relates to the Specific Controls Overlay with conditions to allow and regulate the use and development of the land associated with the Western Renewables Link project.

3. Rezone the existing Bulgana Terminal Station and the new terminal station near Bulgana to a Special Use Zone with a terminal station-specific schedule.
4. Appoint the Minister for Planning as the responsible authority for the project.

What would the Specific Controls Overlay do?

A Specific Controls Overlay and incorporated document would apply specific conditions to the land associated with the project, that would only relate to delivery of the project. The conditions would not apply to the existing use and development of the land, and the underlying zones and overlays would remain unchanged.

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What is a Special Use Zone?

Planning zones regulate how land can and cannot be used. A Special Use Zone can be tailored for specific purposes – in this case, for the existing Bulgana Terminal Station and the new terminal station near Bulgana. Applying a Special Use Zone to these sites will provide an approach consistent with what is already in place for the existing Sydenham Terminal Station site.

When can the community comment on the draft planning scheme amendment?

The draft planning scheme amendment will be an attachment to the exhibited EES for public consideration and comment. This means the community will have a single, consolidated opportunity to make formal submissions about the EES and/or the proposed planning scheme amendment. Details about how to make a submission will be advertised before the exhibition period.

When a draft planning scheme amendment is included in the EES exhibition package, the Minister may also appoint the public inquiry as an advisory committee under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic), to advise specifically about the draft planning scheme amendment. The inquiry and advisory committee will then deliver a written report to the Minister for Planning with conclusions and recommendations to inform the Minister's assessment and any subsequent consideration of the planning scheme amendment.

What are the next steps after the exhibition of the EES?

The Minister will assess the project's social, environmental and economic impacts. The Minister's assessment may conclude that:

- a project would have an acceptable level of environmental effects, with regard to overall project outcomes;
- a project would have an unacceptable level of environmental effects; or
- a project would need major modifications and/or further investigations to establish that an acceptable level of environmental outcomes would be achieved. In this situation, a further assessment process may be required.

If the Minister's assessment of the EES concludes that the environmental effects of the project can be acceptably managed, AusNet will then ask the Minister to prepare, adopt and approve the amendment consistent with the Minister's assessment, without further formal notice, under Section 20(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic). The Environment Effects Statement process must be complete, and Victorian and Commonwealth approvals must be obtained, including approval of the planning scheme amendment, before construction of the transmission line can begin.



More information about planning schemes is available at www.planning.vic.gov.au

More information about the EES process for the Western Renewables Link is available at [Western Renewables Link \(planning.vic.gov.au\)](http://WesternRenewablesLink.planning.vic.gov.au).

More information about the Western Renewables Link project is available on the Western Renewables Link project [website](#), including fact sheets and guides on the Resources page.

More information

Visit the project website westernrenewableslink.com.au for the latest project information.

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