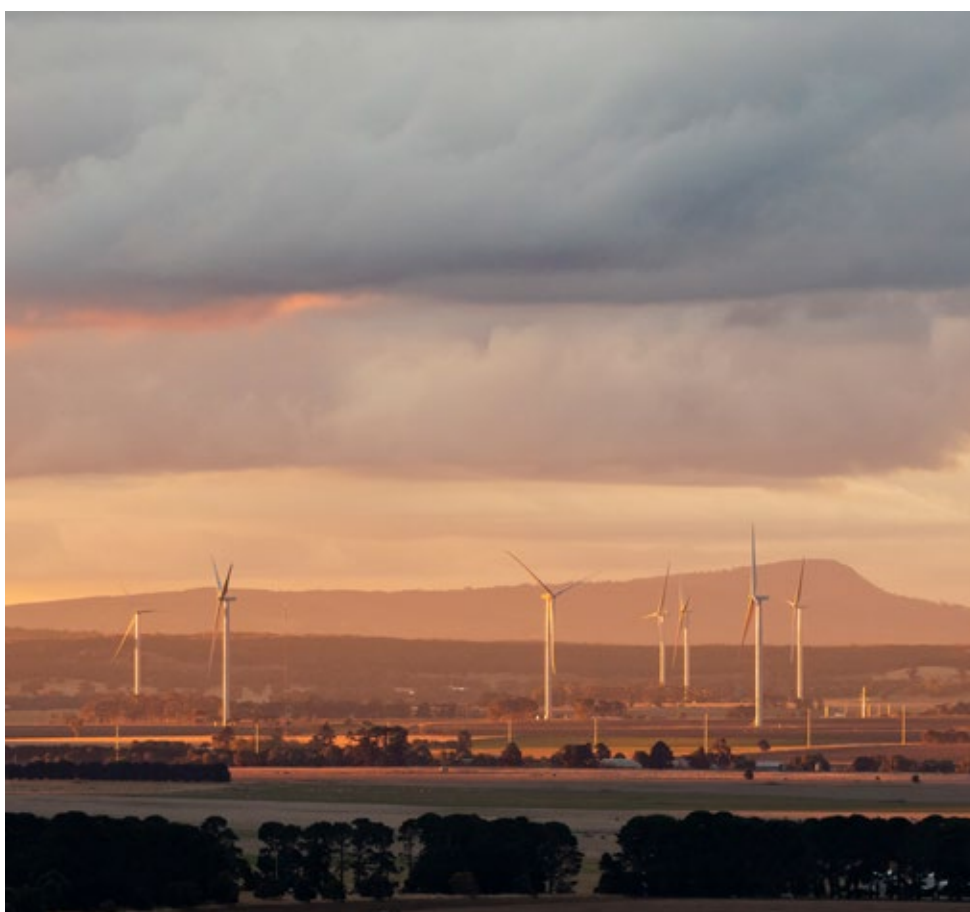


FACT SHEET

Environmental and key project approvals

Introduction

The Western Renewables Link is a critical upgrade of the state's transmission network which will help ensure Victoria's successful transition from coal generated energy to sustainable, affordable and reliable renewable energy. It will connect large scale wind and solar in the west into the grid to power more than half a million homes across Victoria.



The project proposes a new transmission line starting at Bulgana, near Stawell in Victoria's west, and covering approximately 190km to Sydenham in Melbourne's north-west. The project will enable the connection of new renewable energy generated in western Victoria into the National Electricity Market and increase the Victorian transmission network capacity.

The project is being delivered by AusNet Services (AusNet). AusNet currently operates 6,500kms of transmission lines across Victoria.

Purpose of this fact sheet

This fact sheet outlines:

- Environment Effects Statement (EES) process, purpose and engagement phases.
- Key project approvals required.

EES process

The Western Renewables Link is subject to an Environment Effects Statement (EES), the most rigorous environmental impact assessment process in Victoria.

The EES process is administered by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) on behalf of Victoria's Minister for Planning under the *Environment Effects Act 1978*.

The purpose of the EES is to ensure that major projects are designed, constructed and operated to minimise adverse environmental and community impacts.

It gives decision-makers (such as Ministers and statutory authorities) the information they need to determine whether approvals should be granted and what conditions should apply.

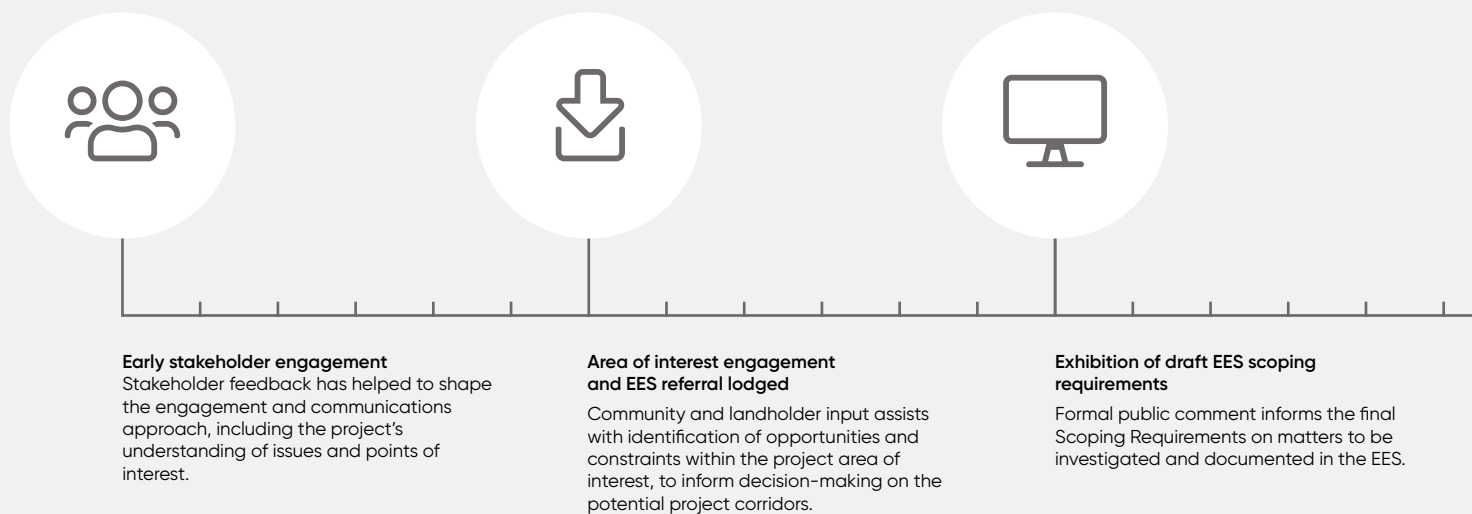
The EES provides a transparent investigation of potential environmental impacts and provides the community with an opportunity to review and provide feedback as the project develops.

During the preparation of the EES, we are undertaking environmental investigations to understand potential impacts from the project and identify how any impacts can be avoided, minimised or managed.

Environment Effects Statement (EES) considerations



Environment Effects Statement engagement phases



Version control

Date

WVTNPV6

24.06.2021

Published to website

WRLV1

13.07.2022

Updated with Western Renewables Link name change, logo and contact details and other minor content updates to reflect current information.



Community involvement

The EES process provides an opportunity for ongoing, transparent community consultation, which is documented in the Western Renewables Link Environment Effects Statement Consultation Plan. The plan was published in February 2021 on the DELWP website and was updated in May 2022 –

https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/513531/EES-Consultation-Plan-May-2022.pdf

Ongoing consultation helps us to identify issues of concern and potential effects and informs the technical studies and the EES. The EES will be exhibited for 30 days for public comment. The timing of the directions and panel hearing will be determined by Planning Panels Victoria. The public exhibition period will allow members of the public to review the EES and provide written submissions on the project to Planning Panels Victoria. The submissions will inform the Panel in making its recommendations to the Minister for Planning.



Further information

Further information on the project EES, including access to the Minister's decision to require an EES, scoping requirements, and EES consultation plan can be found on the DELWP website –

<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/browse-projects/projects/western-victoria-transmission-network-project>



EES preparation and specialist studies

Ongoing community feedback will assist in the:

- Identification of existing values and matters to be considered in environmental, cultural and social studies.
- Development of appropriate and effective measures to avoid and minimise impact and risks.
- Identification of opportunities to maximise benefits.
- Development of a design.



Public exhibition and panel hearing

Draft EES document and supporting technical reports submitted to DELWP for review.

The EES will be exhibited for at least 30 days for public comment, allowing the public to review the EES and provide written submissions on the project to Planning Panels Victoria.

The submissions will inform the panel in making its recommendations to the Minister for Planning.



Ongoing landholder, community and stakeholder engagement

Key project approvals

Planning Scheme Amendment

A Planning Scheme Amendment under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* is the primary approval for the project. A Planning Scheme Amendment applies specific controls over the development of the project. A draft Planning Scheme Amendment will be prepared to propose changes to the planning schemes within the project development area and will be exhibited with the EES for public comment.

Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs)

Cultural Heritage Management Plans will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* to investigate the potential impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage and manage how heritage can be best protected.

To identify Aboriginal heritage in the project area, investigations are being undertaken together with Traditional Owners Groups, Registered Aboriginal Parties and First Peoples – State Relations.

Commonwealth approval

The Commonwealth Government's Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment has confirmed that the project is a 'controlled action' and will require assessment and approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999*. The Commonwealth has determined that it will use the bilateral assessment agreement and rely on the Victorian Government's assessment process (EES) to inform an approval decision under the EPBC Act 1999.

Other approvals

Should the project be approved, several other secondary approvals may be required including:

- Permit to remove protected flora under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.
- Permit to relocate wildlife under the *Wildlife Act 1975*.
- Permit to work within or over waterways under the *Water Act 1989*.

Decisions about whether to grant those approvals may only be made after the respective decision-makers have considered the Minister's assessment, which is the final outcome of the EES process.



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Sign up for information straight to your inbox at the project website www.westernrenewableslink.com.au.

Complaints

If you have a query, a compliment or a complaint, you can let us know by using the online enquiry form on www.westernrenewableslink.com.au. Or you can let us know by:

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Feedback

You can provide feedback on this document via our website www.westernrenewableslink.com.au or by calling 1300 360 795 or by emailing info@westernrenewableslink.com.au

Need an interpreter?



If English is not your first language or you need an interpreter, please call 13 14 50.

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