Western Renewables Link Community Webinar
25 March, 2024 – 11:00am
Transcript

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Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- My name is Jen Lilburn. I'm an independent facilitator and community engagement specialist based in Geelong. Ausnet has asked me to facilitate this session, it's jam packed with information, and we will be trying to answer all of your questions as we go through the next hour and a half.
- You will have heard the woman say that recording is in progress. This session will be recorded and placed on the webinar. So please share it with your neighbours and other members of the community.
- Next slide, please.
- So today we will, after very quick welcome and acknowledgement of country. I will be letting you know who will be presenting today. We will be doing some very quick housekeeping, including how you can submit questions for answering during the webinar, and then we'll have presentation by project specialists and then come back to questions and answers. I will try and get a few questions answered as we go through the session, so that we don't leave them all to the end. So please get your questions in quickly.

- Thank you. Next slide
- Ausnet has asked me to acknowledge country on their behalf. Ausnet acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands on which the proposed Western Renewables Link will operate and pays respect to their elders, past, present, and emerging AusNet recognizes the role of each Registered Aboriginal Party and Traditional Owners in the management, protection and promotion of cultural heritage connection to country cultural awareness and land access.
- AusNet will continue to work in partnership with First Peoples State Relations Victoria and the recognised Registered aboriginal parties of the Barengi Gadjin, Eastern Maar, Djaara (Dja Dja Wurrung), Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Traditional Owners Corporations to deliver the project, and I'd like to say that I'm on beautiful Wadawarrung country this morning. Here in Geelong.
- So thanks again for joining us. We will hear from Carolyn, the Western Renewables Link approvals manager. She'll give us a project overview. Denis will speak about easement safety and permitted activities. Daryl will be talking about farming with the proposed transmission lines, and then Mick will follow up with an update on land engagement and landholder engagement.
- You will be muted and we won't be using the raise hand function today. We're going to use the Q&A function for all questions that enables everybody to get their questions in and answered.
- The questions will be sent to our team. No one else will see your questions, and we do ask that. You keep your questions and comments respectful. Of course.
- if we can't answer your questions today, it may be because more information needs to be followed up. Or it may be simply that we run out of time. I'm going to really try to get through all of our questions. But we will respond with the answer, if we haven't been able to answer the question in the webinar today. In order to do that, we need to know who you are. So you are very welcome to provide an anonymous question, but that means that we won't be able to send you the answer if we don't get to it. So all you need to do is provide a name that enables us to link your question with the email address that you use to register for this webinar you'll see down the bottom of your screen. Also, there is a close caption. If you need assistance with the audio, the close caption can be a really great way of being able to hear and understand what has been said today.
- Thanks Jed

- So I talked about the Q&A function in your webinar toolbar. Now, if you haven't been able to find that if you did just hover your mouse down to down the bottom of your screen, that Q&A function should pop up.
- You need to click on that. And then right type in your question, and please make sure you press. Send. Once you press, send that will go through and it will magically appear on my screen here, and I will be able to ensure that it is answered today, providing we have time.
- If you have trouble with the whole QA. Function, that's no problem at all. Just go. You see the email address down the bottom. That's the same email address that you were sent as a reminder to this webinar. So just send your email or just email, your your question to that email address, and that will be included amongst the other questions for me to answer.
- The entirety of the webinar will be recorded and posted and all questions and answers will be made available.
- So I'm going to be quiet now. I'm going to pass over to Carolyn, who is the approvals manager for a quick project overview. Thanks, Carolyn.

00:05:54.170 --> 00:05:55.145

Carolyn - Approvals Manager:

- Thank you, Jen.
- Good morning, everyone. Thank you. Jed. If we can move that on.
- What is the Western Renewables Link project? The project has been in development for approximately 4 years at this stage. And what we're looking at doing is building a high voltage. 500 kilovolt double circuit transmission line from Bulgana out near Stawell through to Sydenham, on the western outskirts of Melbourne.
- This is to help unlock the renewable energy that's been generated in Western Victoria in the Western Victoria renewable energy zone
- At the moment, the wind farms and solar farms in Western Victoria are unable to generate additional electricity because the current lines are at capacity.
- So this is really about moving renewable energy from where it's being generated all the way through into the National electricity market in Melbourne and along the Eastern seaboard.
- This requires a new 500 Kilovolt switch yard near the existing Bulgana Terminal Station in Western Victoria, and then an overhead line all the way through to Sydenham Terminal Station, which is on the western outskirts of Melbourne.

- Thanks, Jed.
- There's been some recent project updates. This is available on our website, but to quickly catch people up. Last year the Victorian Government made an announcement that the line was going to be 500 kilovolts all the way from Bulgana all the way through to Sydenham. Previously it was 220 kilovolts from Bulgana through to a new proposed terminal station at Mount Prospect, north of Ballarat. Now that terminal station is no longer required, as the project is 500 kilovolts all the way.
- As I said earlier, we need a new 500 kilovolt switchyard near the existing Bulgana terminal station, and that is also the area that the other project by the Australian energy market operator AEMO, are going to connect in, which is VNI West, which you may have heard about as well.
- Previously we were going to tie into the terminal station at Waubra. But now, because we're 500 kilovolts all the way, we'll be bypassing Waubra, and you'll see on the map. There's a little sort of purple dot, purple blob, if you like, and we are currently negotiating with landholders and working out the proposed route through that area.
- We also have made a decision around the 2 options around Hepburn Lagoon, and currently the proposed route goes through the southern option beneath Hepburn Lagoon, or south of Hepburn Lagoon.
- As I said, we no longer require the terminal station at Mount Prospect, so that is no longer part of the project and also at Sydenham, previously the rebuild of Sydenham Terminal Station, was part of the project, but what we have done now is because of the delays associated with this project the rebuild at Sydenham Terminal station is now critical, and so there's a separate approval process for the rebuild of Sydenham. So this project will tie into the new Sydenham terminal station, which is going to be immediately north of the existing one.
- Thanks, Jed.
- We've had lots of community feedback around the proposed route, and the proposed route continues to be refined, and most of that is due to one-on-one conversations that we have from host landholders and also surrounding communities and other stakeholders, including government departments and agencies and authorities.
- And most of that work is being generated as a result of our technical surveys and investigations including constructability that we're currently undertaking for the environment effects statement.
- When we actually go out and do field investigations, we're able to ground truth, things that we have discovered through our desktop studies. And it is important that we talk to individual landholders about how the proposed transmission line is going to impact

them and how we can best work together to either avoid or minimise the impact on their farming activities.

- The proposed route was developed to give certainty to landholders and communities along the whole project area. And that forms the basis of what we're going to study in the environment effects statement and other approval documents that we're preparing.
- Landholder and community feedback has influenced the investigation of 7 major route alternatives and multiple corridors. So we've had a look at other alternative routes that have been suggested by members of the public by other agencies. We've had another look at the RIT-T process that AEMO have conducted and I think it's important for people to understand that there's been over 95 transmission line designs and more than 4,700 individual tower moves.
- And that means that for every tower, because we've got approximately 440 towers, that there's an average of 50 tower locations for every route design change. So there's been lots of work that's been put in in conjunction with the community and in conjunction with individual landholders.
- The Western renewables link is currently designed at a higher minimum ground clearance of 15 metres. So this is higher than the remaining 6.5,000 kilometres of transmission line that exists currently in Victoria.
- And a key goal of the project is for us to build long-term social and economic legacy in partnership with our local communities that exist well beyond the project's construction.
- Thank you Jed
- So we've had a number of questions from landholders. And we've also had questions from local communities. And these is a bit of a summary about what people are asking about, and therefore what's going to be discussed in today's webinar.
- So people are asking about farming in the proposed transmission line easement.
- What does that actually mean for them? What does it mean for aerial operations, whether it be spraying or sewing, using aircraft or using drones, cropping and harvesting, whether that be cereal crops or horticultural crops.
- There's been a lot of questions around potato farming in particular, because we know that that central portion of the proposed route is an extremely important horticultural crop, not just for Victoria, but also for Australia.
- People have asked about fencing and the use of global positioning systems and how does that affect the equipment and machinery that is on your tractors and on your harvesters, farming machinery, and around the height of farming machinery, whether that be augurs or potato harvesters, or alternatively bailers.

- And there's also been questions around vehicles and equipment and irrigation and along the proposed route. We have lateral irrigation, pivot irrigation. We've got a number of centre pivots. We've got a number of different types of irrigation.
- People have also asked about living with the proposed transmission line around buildings and dwellings.
- What happens during construction, landscaping metallic structures parking, you know. Can they leave vehicles and equipment underneath the transmission line all of those sorts of things.
- There's been lots of questions around easements, what they actually are and what they and why they are needed and also about future and ongoing access for AusNet to the easement.
- There's been questions and discussions around safety clearances and safety assessments and permits to work which, for those of our landholders who have an existing easement on their property are familiar with. But there are others who are not.
- And also there's been questions around electromagnetic fields, insurance and proposed development on the easement. So there's a wide range of questions there. And hopefully, we can answer some of those for you today in the Webinar.
- We also have just recently published a new landholder guide. And it's available on our website. And that is Easement safety and permitted activities.
- And that's on the project website's resources page. And that's been updated with some recent information from the document that was released a couple of years ago.
- Thank you, Jen. I think it's back to you, Jen. Oh, no! Here we go.
- This webinar is going to focus on easements, the safety clearances, farming with the proposed Western renewable link transmission lines. And that includes looking at farm machinery, irrigation, spraying, global positioning systems and digital global positioning systems, fencing and landholder engagement, and there'll be plenty of opportunity for people to ask questions.
- And now it's back to you, Jen.

00:16:08.580 --> 00:16:25.779

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Thanks very much, Carolyn.
- And I would like to clarify. A very quick question came up at the start of the session. I thought it was actually a note being sent to myself, so I would like to clarify that. Yes, the webinar will be recorded and made available in its entirety.

- The questions and answers are answered within that webinar. So that won't be provided individually after an event. After this event, and Ausnet will let registered people know what was heard during the webinar.
- Carolyn. We've already had a couple of questions come through, and we do have, just a couple of minutes. So the first question is clarifying, what is the switchyard, and what land area will it cover in terms of dimensions? Please.

00:16:57.160 --> 00:17:10.416

Carolyn - Approvals Manager:

- A switch out is basically facilitates the ability of electricity to come through. And then be changed through transformers into a different voltage. So this will be taking electricity will be coming in at 220 kilovolts, which will be from the Horsham to Ballarat line, and will be upgrading it through the transformers to a 500 kilovolt line, which will then be going north for VNI West at 500 kilovolts and further east for us on the Western Renewables Link.

00:17:33.280 --> 00:17:39.768

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator:

- Okay? So into it's not a physical dimension on somebody's property, I think may have.

00:17:40.150 --> 00:17:41.429

Carolyn - Approvals Manager

- Yes, it is. Yes.

00:17:41.430 --> 00:17:41.780

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Okay.

00:17:41.780 --> 00:17:45.280

Carolyn - Approvals Manager

- There are a series of towers and buzz bars and transformers. So yes, there are. It is physical dimensions on somebody's property, and it looks probably not that dissimilar to a terminal station, but perhaps a little bit smaller. It'll be a few 100 meters by a few 100 meters in size, and some of the towers will be potentially up to 80 meters high, which is the case for the 800 for the 500 kilovolt steel lattice towers.

00:18:21.220 --> 00:18:26.749

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Fantastic. Thank you, and the timing of lodgement for the EES, please.

00:18:27.480 --> 00:18:42.239

Carolyn - Approvals Manager

- Yeah, we're looking at towards the end of this year for the lodgement of the EES. We need to do some further field work obviously associated with the upgrade of the project to 500 kilovolts.
- And we need to make sure that we have all of the work that's done in both the biodiversity area, Aboriginal cultural heritage, historic heritage, landscape and visual. And all of those aspects are covered off. So we're looking towards the end of this year Jen.

00:19:00.220 --> 00:19:17.170

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator:

- Terrific. Thank you very much, Carolyn. Let me move on to Denis now. Next slide, please, Jed, and we'll come back to you, Carolyn. I'm sure there'll be questions later in the in the session for you over to you. Denis, Senior Easements Officer.

00:19:17.900 --> 00:19:19.560

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- Thanks, Jen. Thanks, Carolyn.

00:19:20.081 --> 00:19:46.580

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- Yes, I'm the senior easements officer at Ausnet and I look after all of the transmission line easements, or the 6 and half 1,000 kilometers of network that Carolyn mentioned previously. Right across the State. So if you do presently have a transmission line crossing your property. You may have dealt with me in the past. So I do have a good relationship with many, many landowners across the states and AusNet does foster a strong and an active participation between landowners and ourselves on managing easement land, particularly farms and also in residential areas around the metropolitan area.

- So the question, what is an easement. So an easement is needed for the construction and safe operation of a proposed transmission line.
- And it's basically a corridor of land that the agent. I mean, it doesn't own the land at our basement. Only another only contains right? So the land is still in ownership of the current land owner.
- So it's a right that's held by one personal party to access and use part of the land owned by someone else for a particular purpose. In this case the purpose is to transmit electricity.
- The landowner continues to have ownership of a land and use of the easement land.
- Terms of the Easement agreement allow for the landowner to continue doing many of the activities that are done at present while providing a safe and secure environment for the purpose of transmitting electricity.
- So it's a vital instrument, if you like it.
- It accompanies the land title, and it makes it very clear for everybody that particular corridor of land is there for a particular purpose.
- It sets out the arrangements for use of the land. It contains a lot of information and it's a very useful thing to have. So there are many rights that exist through government legislation that that actually don't require an easement for power line. So many, many of the power lines are running across rural land don't actually have a registered easement on the title and the reliance on Government legislation to protect that asset. That can be a little clunky, if you like, having an easement makes it very clear for the landowner. It makes it very clear for the infrastructure owner. So that's why we create easements in these conditions.
- Okay, next slide, please
- So AusNet requires access to the easement, and, as we've said, we do have a very large network across Victoria, and a lot of that. In fact, most of it is over farm land and public land. We do have a number of lines that run through the outskirts of the Melbourne metropolitan area, and then feeding down into the central business district.
- But these are of a lower voltage and you know we do have houses that are quite close to those easements. But the predominant coverage is over farmland.
- So we normally inspect the transmission lines every year, and there are modern technologies now available that allow us to do that by air, by helicopter inspection, by special photography that's taken to inspect all of the conductors and make sure there are no faults, and make sure there's no corrosion. All that sort of thing. So there can be quite often times when aerial patrols are in place.

- And these are all notified on our on the Ausnet website to say when the aerial patrols will be taking place and various public information access areas.
- So we maintain those relationships with landowners to facilitate land uses and farming practices near the transmission lines.
- So we don't just build a transmission line. And then that's it. We have a very long and ongoing relationship.
- And I've worked with many people across the state for many years on managing their transmission line easement and making sure that things happen safely, and that farming practices can continue on as they have been.
- On some properties, access roads and tracks will need to be constructed to obviously to build and maintain the transmission line, and also to enable access in the case of a fault or other requirements.
- Okay, thanks. Next slide.
- So again, under the permitted activities in in the proposed WRL easement.
- Obviously there are some restrictions on the use of land within an easement from overhead transmission lines predominantly.
- Buildings particularly residential buildings, we don't allow residential buildings to be built within transmission line easements. It's obviously for the safety of people not to be living directly underneath lines.
- But one of the main reasons why we don't allow residential buildings is because there are obviously from time to time there are house fires that do occur. There are fires that occur in buildings. You know, caused by whatever faults. You know somebody leaves a candle burning or something.
- Well, if that file were to, you know, to spread and cause smoke and heat the transmission line would have to shut down. So that's a very big reason as to why we don't allow residential buildings and transmission lines but based on our proposed 15 metre ground clearance that Carolyn mentioned the allowed activities within the easement will include more things than we can presently do on our existing network.
- So the grazing in agriculture will continue the cropping potato growing right through at the easement except directly where the tower bases are located and of course those bases are going to be positioned at locations that affect the farming activities as little as possible, so they'll be pushed towards boundaries. They'll be pushed towards roads. Not, you know, putting them right in the middle of a of a paddock, where agricultures currently being carried out.

- So because market gardens, orchards, and all those sort of things nurseries. They're all permitted. We've got a number of big orchards, and you know, cherry growing facilities, strawberries, all sorts of things and they also have some shade structures built over them, which are quite okay. With the transmission one, provided that they built in a way that we've provided information as far as clearances. And what have you
- Water storage dams are permitted? Again, subject to safety clearances. Particularly with relation to dam walls. So we don't want a situation where a dam wall is created and and elevated the existing ground level.
- So the golden rule is that we want to maintain that 15 meters ground clearance at the worst case anywhere in span right along the line. So as long as the dam wall is at least 15 meters vertically below the transmission line. Then that's going to be fine. Pardon me, and also with the water level, too. The water level can't be closer than 15 meters to the line.
- Also allow the operation of irrigation equipment. Some restrictions, as Daryl our agricultural expert will fill you in with a little later, but generally most irrigation equipment will still be able to be used.
- Okay, thanks. Thanks a lot.
- So as safety clearances, I've touched on the 15 meters. That's a that's a very important dimension as far as this new WRL line is concerned.
- It does give us the opportunity to basically drive any vehicle underneath the transmission line that can firstly go on a public road. So agricultural equipment up to 4.6 meters in height can go on a public road. So here we've made that zone of 5 meters. The green zone on this drawing to allow any sort of equip, vehicle, or equipment that can travel on a public road can go across the transmission easement.
- So the 5 meters will allow us to have all those vehicles coming off the road.
- If there's a need to have something higher than 5 meters, and we we're well aware that there's harvesters there. There can be some use, for, you know, tele handlers, all sorts of equipment that can exceed 5 meters. Grain unloading and loading from harvesters. And what have you that will certainly exceed the 5 meters.
- However, we've marked this zone between 5 and 8.6 meters as an area where will provide a safety assessment of what the proposed use is going to be and then we can provide written confirmation that equipment can be used safely within that 5 to 8.6 metre zone.
- The main criteria. We'll be looking at is, can that equipment exceed the 8.6 meters in height and if it can, there's the potential for it to go into that red zone. So if there is a

potential to go into that red zone we'll be looking at a situation where we'll need to issue a permit to work, and that's where the need for a spotter will come in.

- So if the equipment can't exceed the 8.6 meters we'll provide the results of the safety assessment, and then you'll be free to use that equipment without the need for a spotter or a permit.
- So that's pretty much covered those signs, and I'm sure you'll have lots of questions in this area.
- It is a complicated you know part of the project, conveying the information to landowners. But we're more than happy to provide any information that people have gotten. By all means ask questions at the end about this matter.
- Okay, thanks, Jen. Next slide.
- So to arrange a safety assessment. Obviously, we do it free of charge. As I said, we're in a partnership with you.
- We're just as interested as you in my making sure that activities happen safely on farms.
- And so if there's a requirement for a safety assessment, or, as I mentioned earlier, if your equipment can exceed the 8.6 meters and go into that red zone.
- Then that's when we'll need to look at issuing a permit to work. And that's where this email address comes in. PTW, that stands for permit to work at ptw@ausnetservices.com.au. And that website is currently in operation. We get many, many inquiries through that website on a daily basis right across our network. And we're more than happy to answer queries or provide permits where necessary.
- And I think that's about it for this subsection. I'll hand back to you, Jen.

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Thanks, Dennis, and you're right. People are certainly interested in your content, and have started to ask questions. The first one is not so much a question that I'm going to ask you to answer. But something came through about a questioning about what are your qualifications now? Are you a solicitor. I have here that you have over 40 years experience in electricity, industry, and transmission.

00:32:22.780 --> 00:32:23.440

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer:

- Yes

00:32:23.440 --> 00:32:26.989

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Probably qualifies you as a subject matter, expert in.

00:32:26.990 --> 00:32:37.249

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- Yeah, look, look, I'm not a solicitor. I don't pretend I'm not even a bush lawyer. No, I look. I do know a lot about legislation. I started my career as a surveyor and work through the whole company
- I worked on many transmission line surveys back in those days we did surveys on the ground nowadays. It's done by a Lidar and an aerial capturing that sort of thing. But I've worked with construction. I've worked in power stations. I've worked in distribution across the network. And I've certainly worked in the property area. So I know the legislation and what have you that's associated with easement, creation and rights that land owners have when they've got an easement on their property.

00:33:16.360 --> 00:33:21.343

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator:

- Thank you, Dennis. I'll just ask one more question that has come through
- Before we go on to Daryl. Will safety assessments be carried out prior to construction and what timeframe would a safety assessment take to be carried out.

00:33:33.650 --> 00:33:44.249

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- We certainly can do it before the line is built. We won't be able to do it until the final tower locations and design for the line is ready because it will need to be assessed, based on clearance at any given point along the line. So without that final design, we can't do it
- We can certainly give preliminary information. And if we work on the 15 meters minimum ground clearance which we're going to have it doesn't really matter where the line is, because we're working to the 15 meter height.
- We can certainly provide you with safety assessment. Before the line is existing.

00:34:14.179 --> 00:34:16.389

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Great. Thank you very much.

- I might pass over to Daryl now.
- And people are clearly interested in the speakers and their background. So Daryl is an agricultural specialist with 20 plus years experience as a farm business consultant over to you, Darryl, and thanks very much, Dennis. We'll come back to you, no doubt, for questions at the end.

00:34:41.219 --> 00:34:42.499

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- Yeah, thanks Jen and Denis. My name is Daryl and I'm providing some agricultural support to the project, guessing my day to day job working with farmers and farm business management consulting, I actually have a number of clients who have got the existing transmission lines and they working, you know, continue to farm generally with under those easements. But there are some restrictions and some things we have to consider that need to be managed, and today we'll cover, cover those and hopefully answer, be able to answer the questions you may have still sort of talked about. Look on a whole, most farming activities can continue within the easement.
- Obviously, where the actual tower is. That will be land lost to your activities, and that will be part of that, the compensation process that that is part of the project. But on a whole, most farming activities can continue.
- Next slide please Jed.
- So I look across the line, is there a range of different agriculture activities. Cereal cropping, grazing, horticulture, potatoes, mainly and there's a lot of different equipment that gets used in those different agricultural pursuits. As those pictures demonstrate there. But probably the key. Most important aspect of machinery is and the capacity to operate within the easement is in relation to height and Denis covered that quite specifically in his presentation. But yeah, effectively, under 5 meters. It's anything can pretty much operate and the majority of farm equipment would be within that height restriction. But then, as Dennis pointed out, after 8.6, there will need to be a a safety assessment conducted and you know the issue here is all driven by safety. It's really important. And you know any of those equipment that could extend above that 5 meter mark.
- We'll need to have those safety assessments conducted once a. I see system has been done, then there won't be need to do another one, and unless otherwise advised.
- And guessing that whole design process is what Denis alluded to, there will be. There has been, and will be, an attempt to have, the location of the Towers. That you know,

at least disruptive to a farming operation, knowing too well, though, that there will be some disruption to them.

- But yeah, siting them closer to existing boundaries, etc, will be part of the process. And a term terminology it's called micrositing, which is just a small movements of tower is to best meet. The individual needs will be part of that process.
- Okay, next slide, please Jed
- Irrigation is another component of land use that happens within the easement.
- And as you can see by these pictures here, laterals and pivot irrigators are permissible under the easements. Again, if this happens to be where heights are beyond 5 meters, which is a rarity, but if they are, they will be again in that safety assessment that those type of irrigators can continue, we know, within an easement.
- Obviously they, if there is a tower that impedes the actual movement of those irrigators. There can be some again, micrositings to reduce the impact. There can be, you know, potentially some reconfiguration of setups. But that, again, will be all part of the I guess. The compensation and disturbance process that goes forward with the project.
- The one type of irrigator that won't be able to operate within the easements are the high pressure rain guns is they've they referred to differently depending where you are. But those pictures, I think, can illustrate what they are. And the reality there, is that there is that potential risk that the actual spray of the water could cause some arcing issues. In terms of the height so the rain gun irrigators are irrigators that won't be able to be used within within an easement.
- Next slide. Please Jed
- Aerial spraying is used by a lot of farm businesses. Whether it's you know, spraying for you know, herbicide or fertilizer use, or whatever it might be. Manned aircraft is not allowed within the easement. So our traditional crop dusting type activities with manned aircraft will not be able to be conducted within the easement.
- The use of drones that are coming more and more commonplace in in agriculture today, and will go more so into the future. We'll be able to operate within the easements with once the permissions are achieved. We need to make sure that. You know drone operators are operating, can you know, according to standards and the like. So those type of activities will be permitted within the easement.
- And again, you know, the normal spraying in the ground base spraying will be able to be able to continue so there will be some impost in the aerial spraying section. But again, there's ways to mitigate against that.
- Next slide. Thanks.

- As far as GPS and or differential GPS as well, they will continue to be able to be utilised within an easement just like any sort of steel structure, though. If you're in close proximity to say, the tower the steel work could cause some multi pathing but that will be only within, you know, very close to the tower, and to itself, and generally the frequencies with of those systems that they operate generally quite different to the electrical energy transfers so they can be there is generally a limited impact on GPS systems.
- Sometimes with there's a base tower, a lot. There might be some realignment of the base tower if there's some restriction there. But again, that will be all part of that the compensation and disturbance assessment that occurs as part of the process
- Next slide. Thanks, Jed.
- So with fencing. there will be some safety measures required with fencing mainly earthing requirements, but there will be direction and advice provided to landholders. Specific to their situation and fencing type. Again, all part of the the sort of implementation of the program. But yeah. So in effect, fencing can go underneath the the transmission line, it can run along parallel, but there just needs to be some of those safety additions to fencing, or which will be provided to each individual landholding specific to the fence and their alignment of their fencing.
- So, Jen, I think that that winds my slides up.

00:43:39.320 --> 00:43:55.019

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- That mute button was going to catch me at some stage. Daryl, we just had one question for you at the moment. There are other questions that have come through, but I think other people will answer those in a little while. But this question to get this right. I can grow my crop under the lines, but I cannot spray as usual with a helicopter. Is that correct?

00:44:07.202 --> 00:44:23.679

Daryl - Agricultural Specialist:

- Yes, that's that's correct. There manned aircraft for spraying is not allowed within the easement use of drone though with permissions, will be able to operate. But no, a helicopter spraying would not be allowed under the easement.

00:44:24.470 --> 00:44:25.130

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Daryl thank you. And just to clarify also, there will be a transcript of the Webinar posted in full on the website, and also, there is a question come through, why can't I see other questions?
- The questions come through to the presenters and to myself. And then I read them back out, but you'll see them in the transcript when they come through, and I am reading everything out and we do have other questions. But I'm going to first pass to Mick if we could have the next slide, please.
- So Mick is the land engagement manager, and I believe, Mick, you lead a team of land liaison officers who are working with landholders to host the infrastructure - over to you.

00:45:17.250 --> 00:45:21.223

Mick - Land Engagement Manager

- Thanks, Jen. I think what's highlighted here is that there's some opportunities for the landholders to engage to engage with AusNet. There's a lot of information that is required to come to terms with any new development such as this one that impacts on your business model.
- First of all, can I make a small correction earlier on? We said that they were over 4,700 tower movements. With the 400 plus towers that's an average of 10 tower movements. I think we mentioned 50, but that was just my basic maths pulling that one up.
- What we currently doing is we're working with the landholders who are impacted by the transmission line.
- We're rolling out offers for easement. They're based on what we've assessed to be the proposed route.
- Yeah. Still, opportunities for micrositing as Daryl mentioned.
- We're also working on if your operations do change, so if you have to go for a big gun then we'll be talking to you about what other alternatives are there out there because we do want your paddock to continue as a cropping paddock, so would lateral irrigators work for you, or possibly a set of pivot. So a number of my team qualified in various areas of farming construction and specifically, we've just recently had some construction teams tour through as a result of direct questions from landholders.
- So if you, as a landholder impacted by this transmission line had any specific need for any subject matter expert to come and visit your property. Your land liaison officer will arrange that.
- Thanks. Jen.

- OK

00:47:25.800 --> 00:47:52.530

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator:

- Hey I think that's back to me. Before we go into the general questions and answers, the question came through about micrositing, which I think you may be able to answer Mick can, if not, well I'll say also input from Carolyn. So the question is micrositing, how will you do this for paddock after paddock engineering wise, I presume, a straight line for as long a stretch as possible.
- Is this the aim? Can you please explain the likelihood of micrositing on each paddock with a tower.

00:48:01.070 --> 00:48:30.129

Mick - Land Engagement Manager

- Yeah, look, each paddock with a tower. The likelihood on every single paddock is very, very difficult to difficult. However, what we've been able to identify on an individual basis, is moving a tower from one location which was on crop land onto grazing country has been an option. We've also looked at, and sometimes just on a desktop basis, on the nature of irrigation, and with centre pivots where we've tried to increase the span. So there's some engineering solutions to increase the span which can range from 450 to 550 meters.
- Yeah, it's a good question, because it's linear project. And obviously, yeah, the ramifications can be felt down the line as well. So we're not trying to fix one person's problem up to create another one for another person. But we are working with all parties genuinely to get an outcome which sees a preferable positioning of those towers.

00:49:04.640 --> 00:49:06.279

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Thank you very much.
- Okay, so we do have a range of questions that have come up so far. So if I could have all the presenters back please, with their screens.
- And the person who asked the question about micrositing wondered if what I have said. I'll read the question.
- It was Daryl who mentioned micrositing. Why ask Mick so, Darryl? Do you have anything to add to Mick's comment about or answer about micro-siting? Please.

00:49:51.380 --> 00:50:04.610

Daryl - Agricultural Specialist

- No, I think, Mick, cover that very pretty well, and Mick's obviously been on the ground with his team, and having these some of these specific discussions with landholders. So you know, I think, cover that pretty well.

00:50:06.520 --> 00:50:07.790

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Thank you.

00:50:08.460 --> 00:50:25.989

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Alright. So I'm back up to the top. A question that came through Carolyn while you were talking was, what is the time period of all the design changes after the final route was announced in 2022 or before that.

00:50:27.390 --> 00:50:49.049

Carolyn - Approvals Manager

- There isn't a final route as such. We have the proposed route, but the final route won't be determined until we get to the end of the approval process, because the final route is effectively determined by government by the decision making around the project. So we can put forward what we proposed route or preferred route if you like, but the final route, the decision is actually made by government around what impacts are acceptable and what environmental and social and economic impacts are. Not. So we will put forward our proposed route within the Environment Effects Statement.
- But at this stage there's no such thing as the final route until the approval process has been concluded.

00:51:18.770 --> 00:51:29.330

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Do you have a I know it's hard to put a date on something like that. But do you have a rough ballpark? Because the question was about the time period. Are you able to provide.

00:51:29.709 --> 00:51:49.800

Carolyn - Approvals Manager

- And even though we're you know, finalising certain aspects of the environment effects statement. At the moment, we are still having conversations with those individual landholders. Around, you know, not just micrositing, but also looking at potential route changes as we uncover more information from our field surveys then that basically triggers us to go and do more work about potential changes to the proposed route.
- We are hoping in the next couple of months we'll have an updated proposed route again for people to have a look at to see where changes have been made. So I would anticipate. By the middle of the year we will have an updated proposed route for people to look at on the website.

00:52:18.200 --> 00:52:22.379

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Thank you, Carolyn, and while you have the microphone your presentation, that is not enough detail about the switch yard by now you will know exactly what is needed.
- This is part one of the question and the second part was, Why were you talking about the Ballarat to Horsham line?

00:52:40.190 --> 00:53:03.769

Carolyn - Approvals Manager

- Okay, one of the purposes of this project is making sure that we're moving electricity around more efficiently and more effectively from not just where electricity has been generated, but also to other users of electricity. So the existing transmission line of, Horsham to Ballarat is an important part of this network, and it's one that the Western Renewable Link has to tie into, similar to the Ballarat to Bendigo line, where we'll be running alongside in that area through the middle portion of the proposed route. So what's critical here is the interconnectedness of the electricity transmission network. So that's why I was talking about the Horsham to Ballarat line, and that's currently at 220 kilovolts.
- And obviously the Western Renewables Link will be at 500 kilovolts. So we will need step up, or large transformers to transform that 220 kilovolts to 500 kilovolts in terms of what is required at the switch yard. It is slightly smaller than an existing terminal station, but a lot of the equipment that is there is fairly similar in terms of you'll see these open steel lattice towers, open steel lattice, horizontal bars running through that. There'll be an office there.

- So the layout of the terminal Station, Bulgana and the new associated 500 Kilovolt switch yard will be made public. We'll be providing some more information about that once we get a little bit further down the track with some of our work.
- But certainly all of that detail will be in the Environment Effect Statement. When that goes on public exhibition.

00:54:49.100 --> 00:55:05.189

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Thank you, Carolyn.
- Now, this question may be relevant to you or Mick. So I'll get you guys to work that out.
- Why do you say? Not putting through the middle of paddocks when the interactive map with the proposed route shows that you are or you will have to zigzag zig for every single parcel of land to avoid going through them. Please explain how your statement is correct, and how you will carry that out. Over 200 kilometers. So I guess that's referring to something that Mick maybe said.

00:55:23.410 --> 00:55:33.050

Carolyn - Approvals Manager

- On the proposed route that's shown on the website at the moment, t's not. Yes, you can blow it up to individual land cadastre but there has been a number of refinements on individual properties as a consequence of our work and our engagement with the landholders which Mick's team has been responsible for.
- And so where it's showing that it might be going through the middle of a paddock at the moment. Some of that refinement is some of that work that Mick was talking about where we've moved things either into a neighbouring paddock or alternatively closer to a fence to reduce the impacts on landholders.
- And that is why it's so important that individual landholders are talking to us and we have the opportunity to discuss the potential impacts on their property. Mick, did you want to add anything to that.

00:56:17.862 --> 00:56:22.257

Mick - Land Engagement Manager

- Yeah, I think a couple of things is that what's really important here, is to understand each landholders specific type of equipment. And to Denis' point around those preliminary assessments. Get some feedback to each individual landholder how they

can operate within in these regards, to whether it's along a boundary line or across the property.

- Some of our engagements already have cited that putting a, whilst it appears neat and tidy, putting a tail next to a fence is not all that suitable, given the operational requirements of the land holder themselves and position off fences gives the ability to room to move around this this.
- Yeah, it's a very valid question. But I think to the point is with each individual's input we can hopefully work out a mitigated position in terms of how operates on the operations.

00:57:21.380 --> 00:57:28.749

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Thank you. There were earlier questions. But I just wanted to come back to you, Carolyn, because of a question you just answered.
- What does slightly smaller mean? I I think we're talking about the switch yards. We do not know the size of a normal terminal station.
- Thank you.

00:57:39.608 --> 00:57:47.969

Carolyn - Approvals Manager

- In this case the new 500kv switchyard is approximately about 400 meters by about 250 meters.
- But there will be towers and obviously, transmission lines going into it. So even though there might be an area that's fenced off, there will still be infrastructure immediately outside of that with the transmission lines coming in.

00:58:05.320 --> 00:58:06.410

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Thank you.
- Question for Denis or Daryl. I'm not sure. I gather landholders are not responsible for maintaining vegetation in easements. So how is a farmer going to maintain pastures in the easement.

00:58:22.765 --> 00:58:25.149

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- Thanks, Jen. Yes, that's a that's a good question.

- As far as the maintenance of the actual land is concerned. Also, it doesn't do maintenance at the ground. The only time that we get involved in actual ground maintenance is,if a tree grows too close to the line and it has to be either trimmed or removed for safety reasons.
- But as far as the actual ground area is concerned, we're still regarding that as land that will be used by the land owner, or the farmer and it won't be just left to you know go to waste, for instance.
- So it's really the land owners responsibility to actually look after the ground maintenance, because we'd expect that they'd still be using that land for whatever they're using it for at the moment around the tower base, though.
- I mean, if they if they were to become yeah, overgrown with something, you know, a blackberry or something like that. Well, certainly we would look after that that type of thing to remove anything that's on slightly between the towers that's we're really expecting that that land will continue to be productive and used as it is now.

00:59:39.500 --> 00:59:44.069

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Thank you. And just a note on time. We have half an hour left and I've got 3 or 4 questions still unanswered. So, participants. If you want to get your questions in please do.
- So speaking of distance between towers. What's the average distance between towers along the route. I think this might be for you, Carolyn.

01:00:05.580 --> 01:00:32.770

Carolyn - Approvals Manager

- Yeah, it's generally between 450 and 500 meters, depending upon what area that we are spanning, that enables us to go across particularly sensitive areas, whether it be relating to heritage or relating to flora and fauna. The other thing is that so in some cases some spans are longer.
- So, for example, the span that's going across Merrimu reservoir. that will be a longer span, and also where we have turns in the proposed route. They may be shorter spans with heavier towers, because they require greater strain because of the change in direction, so it is quite variable, but the average is between 450 and 550 metres.

01:00:59.550 --> 01:01:07.569

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Thanks, Carolyn. And am I right in thinking there is a fact sheet on the website that might provide more information about this.

01:01:07.800 --> 01:01:17.689

Carolyn - Approvals Manager

- There certainly is. There is some information available on the website under the resources page. There is fact sheets on this information.
- Thank you.

01:01:20.750 --> 01:01:47.519

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Okay,somebody asked for presentation to be sent by email, the full presentation and the transcript and the recording will all be placed on the website in coming days, and a person has also asked in respect of the Tower relocation work and some information and some comment there about some direct conversations they've been having. That person will be emailed directly the land team will be doing that. So stand by your computer.
- Okay, I have one more question enough at so far. For you, Carolyn.
- So why is this on the WRL map? And has been since before Christmas
- *The Western Renewables link is now proposed as a 500kv. Transmission line from Sydenham to Bulgana. This map will be Updated in the coming weeks to reflect the changes to the project for more information. Click here.*

01:02:31.310 --> 01:02:56.710

Carolyn - Approvals Manager:

- And the reason the information hasn't been updated is that we're still working with landholders, As for all of our work, we work with the individual landholders first, before we notify members of the general public around changes to the proposed route and changes to the project. And so we're still working with some individual landholders.
- And that's why I've said that there will be an update in the next couple of months, and yes, initially, we thought we'd be able to publish that earlier this year. But there's been some further work and further refinement, particularly around that Waubra area where we're diverting past the Waubra Terminal Station.

01:03:19.790 --> 01:03:20.939

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator:

- Thank you
- Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator: Why do we need to contact dial before you dig? If cultivating deeper than 300 mls given, the lines are overhead. Is that one for you, Denis?

01:03:32.890 --> 01:03:44.919

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- Yes, thanks, Jen.
- Look, it's not specifically our requirement. It's the dial before you dig requirement. It's a legislated requirement for anybody who's digging to put in a dial before you dig request.
- So it's not so much us. But our area of interest is basically around the tower.
- So we don't want people digging around the tower deeper than 300 mm to make sure that number one. The tower stability isn't interfered with, so that the footings remain strong and stable. There's no impact from the egress of water or anything like that, or, you know, trenching and that sort of thing. So it's very important that digging is not done around the tower, but certainly along the line. You're exactly right. The line is overhead, but the main reason why we have our line overhead lines until we dig is to make sure that people who are using equipment like an excavator might contact with us so that we can make sure that they're going to do the digging safely. That that's the number. One reason why all of our overhead transmission lines are in dial before you dig.
- You're right in saying that we don't have anything underground, and the only thing underground is basically around the tower that we're interested in.
- So it is important to do a dial before you dig, or contact us directly. So it's one or the other. If you do contact dial before you dig you obviously get a response from us, and it will advise you on the next steps to take.

01:05:15.840 --> 01:05:27.166

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator:

- Daryl, you're looking left out, but you've got a question here now. Our boom, spray and header are over 5 meters, so we'll have to apply for a safety assessment. What are, so what are some of the practical outcomes of this, as in what may we be prohibited from doing. My area of familiarity is with VNI West. But I'm assuming the rules are the same.

01:05:44.340 --> 01:05:52.565

Daryl - Agricultural Specialist:

- Yeah, thanks. Jen. And Denis might jump in after, but look effectively, the guidelines of this, you know similar, because they're similar sort of power lines in terms of between VNI West and the Western Renewables. But effectively, yeah, there's a safety assessment required over 5 meters. And again, it's just to make sure that there is not going to be that permissible area of going beyond the 8.6 meter height.
- And it's a check to do so. And once that check is being done and it's going, and it's permitted. You know this, the equipment won't go beyond 8.6. Then there will be an assessment and a right to go certificate, or whatever it's called Denis. You might give the terminology there, you know, within that circumstance. So that's effectively what will happen. And once, as we said, a safety assessment has been done, and it's got the approval. Then then they won't need to be another approval, unless you know, unless something changes so hopefully that covers it. But, Dennis, do you want to add anything further.

01:06:59.900 --> 01:07:05.518

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- Yeah, that's exactly right, Daryl, you've covered it very well. The main area of interest that we have is the equipment that's going to be used. Is there any possibility that it can go above 8.6 meters? Now you may have a need to operate it at, say, 7 meters, or 7 and a half meters. But does it have an extendable boom that will allow to go above 8.6 meters
- And that's what we have to be very careful with, because you know, we've seen instances of operator error, or somebody has a faint attack, or something like that while they're operating sort of equipment. And if there's any chance that it can exceed that 8.6 meters, even if it's not intended to, then we certainly need to know about that.
- If it can't go above the 8.6 meters, if it's impossible with physically, you know, it's at the maximum height 8 meters, or whatever we'll provide you with written permission to use that on an ongoing basis, and you won't need to reapply for that unless you change the equipment.
- If so, if it can go above 8.6 meters. That's the trigger for a permit to work, and a permit to work will be issued, even if the equipment can go above 8.6 meters. But there'll need to be a spotter engaged to surplus that the use of that equipment
- so about the troubles most of it.

01:08:28.790 --> 01:08:34.510

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Thank you.
- And Daryl. You might have mentioned if something changes this person is wondering what you mean by that. What constitutes if something changes.

01:08:40.590 --> 01:08:47.889

Daryl - Agricultural Specialist

- Oh, well, if like what Denis just said then. If the equipment was to change and something was added to it, or whatever then then there would need to be, you know, another review and a check to see if it still meets the requirements before. You know, a spotter might be needed in the process.

01:09:03.660 --> 01:09:04.760

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- The guide says that end guns are now permitted. Is that correct? So I'm assuming this is the landholder guide that is now on the website.

01:09:15.240 --> 01:09:18.780

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- Yes, that's right, Jen. end guns are permitted on the lateral and pivot irrigators, and tend to be of the type that is it a lower pressure and the trajectory of the water tends to be more horizontally focus rather than up in the air like a like a high pressure gun.
- And also a lot of the pivot and lateral irrigators. You can. You can actually fit a step down pipe which lowers the height of the end gun and that gives us even more ability to have a more high pressure fitting if needed.
- So it's all not allowing something to spray up into the air. So just a end gun with a low trajectory will still be permitted.

01:10:10.870 --> 01:10:14.599

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Thank you. And what or who can be a spotter.

01:10:17.171 --> 01:10:28.270

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- Well, you need to be qualified to be a spotter. There are courses that you can undertake through the Victorian electricity supply industry.
- But they they're on call from in all areas across the State. You just need to Google a spotter in my area and you'll find somebody, and you can bring them in to supervise the work.
- But the spotter won't be needed unless that's a requirement. That's part of the permit to work.

01:10:47.410 --> 01:10:48.290

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- What would heat cause to the line? Sorry I'll start again would heat cause the line to sag. Therefore, reducing the clearance between machine and line.

01:11:01.930 --> 01:11:15.929

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- Yes, the heat will certainly cause the line to sag. But the 15 meters grand clearance that that that's been provided for. This line is based on the conductors. Maximum temperature.
- So in most cases on any given day we'll have significantly more ground clearance than 15 meters. Possibly we'll have 17 meters 18 meters. There is quite a bit of sag in in the lines as a result of heat but the lowest, the conductor will come is 15 meters above the ground, so we don't really need to be concerned about the reduction in clearance between the equipment and the line, because we're always going to be working on 15 meters.

01:11:53.880 --> 01:12:00.199

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- I have got 2 questions here in relation to spotters. First is, who pays for the spotter and the second is, what if I can't get a spotter, when I need one.

01:12:07.004 --> 01:12:18.890

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer:

- Look! If it's an emergency situation, you can't get a spotter. Somebody from Ausnet will be more than happy to come out and assist with that. if you've got emergency works, or whatever spotters are pretty easy to obtain. Across the State, there are. There are a

large number of them and if you had a need for a spotter on a regular basis. There's no reason why you couldn't go off and do the spotters course yourself.

- There's no restriction on who can do a spotters course they usually run out of a lot of the TAFE colleges.
- So yeah. Anybody an employee on the farm, for instance? You could. You could send them off to do the spotters course, and that'd be a qualified spotter.

01:12:56.430 --> 01:12:58.719

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- and who pays for the spotter.

01:12:59.010 --> 01:13:04.849

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- The actual spotter would have to be paid for. Who's whoever's doing work so they may only be needed for an hour or something like that. The rates I don't know what the rights are. Specifically, everyone would be different. But that would generally be covered by the person doing the work, so whether it be a contractor or the landowner doing the work, they're responsible for the employment of the spotter.
- But, as I say, it. It is very easy to carry out a spotters training course, and therefore you wouldn't need to pay anybody in future.

01:13:36.520 --> 01:13:39.859

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Can you provide any further advice for somebody who might do? Do you feel you've covered that? That was a question that came through while you were talking about spotters, can you provide for us on how to become a spotter?

01:13:47.310 --> 01:13:59.990

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- Oh, yes, absolutely. Look! We can put that up onto the onto the information page. How to become a spotter whereabouts. You can do the courses, and also you know how to might contact with spotters.
- You can certainly get other information if you want to look up the information directly yourself. You can go to Energy Safe Victoria's website. And just look up spotters, how to become one where to do the training. And it's yes, it's not a difficult thing to organize.

01:14:18.810 --> 01:14:19.830

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Fantastic
- Another 3 questions. Spotters are getting a lot of interest here. What would be an emergency where you would need to be spotted.
- So you were talking about in the in the event of emergency, AusNet could assist.

01:14:34.100 --> 01:14:50.999

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- Yes. Well, look, we do. From time to time we get burst water mines, for instance. Where water authority has to come in and repair pipe work. They need to bring in an evacuator . We've got works on the rail network. Generally, it's infrastructure that that fails.
- If you had something on your property that's like a water pipe or some piece of infrastructure that's failed and you need to repair it straight away. That would constitute an emergency.
- And certainly, you know, we're able to be contacted under that sort of situation.

01:15:15.750 --> 01:15:18.430

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Thank you. What insurance coverage would you need to operate as a spotter.

01:15:24.957 --> 01:15:37.409

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- That's a very good question. I don't believe that there is insurance coverage involved, but I stand a bit corrected on that. But now, I'd need to check with Energy Safe Victoria, on that, and we can certainly get the correct answer that question and publish that on our responses.

01:15:44.030 --> 01:15:52.090

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Okay, did that person did provide their email address and name as well. So we can get back to them directly.

01:15:55.590 --> 01:16:01.319

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- When somebody sorry, Jen, but when you apply for a permit there, there are certain requirements as far as liabilities, and those sorts of things. So obviously, if a person is issued a permit, and the requirement is to obtain a spotter. They're responsible. The person carrying out the work is responsible to abide by those permit conditions. So there is some responsibility on the person performing the work for these sorts of things.

01:16:31.550 --> 01:16:37.280

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Okay. Still, spotter questions. How long does the spotter accreditation last for.

01:16:39.166 --> 01:16:50.599

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- Look, again that's out of my area of expertise, Jen, that's something that we'll need to publish or refer people on to Energy Safe Victoria for further information about that.

01:16:51.110 --> 01:16:52.819

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Okay, no worries but is the cost of any spotter activities reimbursed by AusNet.

01:17:03.920 --> 01:17:08.610

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer:

- No, it's not reimbursed by but can I just say that
- we would be aiming to have as little work out under these lines under the requirements of a spotter as possible.
- I could only envisage works requiring a large excavator. You know, sort of drilling machines.
- Not necessarily farming equipment. We, we're very confident that most of the farming equipment will fit within the 8.6 meters and not require a spotter.
- So I wouldn't want people to think that a spotter is going to be required for all the works that they're doing on their farm. That's near an easement because the way that this, the line with the ground clearance is being designed, it's it's to remove that that need for that spotter.

01:18:00.550 --> 01:18:01.390

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Thank you.
- There was a question. Could AusNet run a group spotters course and pay for it. And the comment that has come back from the team is, I will take that up with the project team for further discussion and consideration. Would we need to be registered with Ausnet as a spotter, to be covered.

01:18:26.070 --> 01:18:27.389

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer:

- No, no, no! The registration is through the TAFE network. And Energy Safe Victoria, it's not with AusNet.

01:18:36.380 --> 01:18:36.985

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Okay

01:18:37.590 --> 01:18:42.140

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- And what I say, this, seems a very good idea to have a group do some training, some spotters training at that. That is, that's a very good idea.

01:18:50.220 --> 01:18:53.437

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Okay like that one for follow up, too.
- Is there compensation available? For if a spotter is delayed and production losses are sustained.

01:19:05.936 --> 01:19:17.369

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer:

- Again. As I mentioned before, I think that if we're talking about normal production and normal farming activities, we we're not going to be getting into the requirement for a spotter
- it's that unforeseen circumstance where a very large piece of equipment is required.
- The arrangement between the spotter and the person carrying out the work is an arrangement between themselves that AusNet is not party to.

- So I think that if there is some you know requirement for a spotter to be there at a certain time that's between the spotter and the and the person requiring the spotter.

01:19:49.260 --> 01:19:59.919

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator:

- Hey. We'll leave spotters for the moment. My gun irrigator needs to be more flat, flatter, similar to a pivot. Can I use it.
- I'm not sure is that for Daryl or for Dennis.

01:20:06.780 --> 01:20:10.923

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- I'll look, I'll start with it. And Daryl might have a bit more information.
- I think the main thing is that if the high pressure gun, irrigator is strong enough to have the water jet go close to the conductors, then it won't be allowed, even if it's a change to operate at a flatter trajectory it's still the pressure is still there that would enable it to make contact with the lines. If something were to go wrong with it.
- So I don't think that we'd be making an exception for a modified spot of it was not angled further into the air.
- Daryl might have some more info on that.

01:20:55.515 --> 01:20:58.490

Daryl - Agricultural Specialist

- No, just to reinforce, because you know, in my farming experience nothing usually goes totally according to plan. And there's a lot of things can happen. And in my irrigation days under, in in spud growing world. You know, you can have you know, a ditch or a wet area or overly wet area.
- And the gun can actually, you know, change, it's you know, it might be flat there normally, but it could actually go up. And if it has the capacity to go up then, yeah, that needs to be prevented. So there is going to be a restriction on those gun irrigators.

01:21:36.780 --> 01:21:46.370

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Thank you. Stubble burning and wind grow within. easements. Yes or no, I've heard yes, but not if it's too smoky. Seems a bit ambiguous.

01:21:48.870 --> 01:22:02.149

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- Correct, the stubble burning. Yes, wind drive burning would be discouraged because of the amount of fuel available, but certainly the stubble burning with a permit would be acceptable, and we'd be encouraging the lighting of the stubble on days that where the wind conditions are favourable to blow the smoke away from the line.
- It's certainly stubble burning. Yes, wind grow burning no.

01:22:20.990 --> 01:22:22.920

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Okay, thank you.
- I think this is a comment which obviously will go through to the team and bring it to their attention. Who is looking after the Victorian taxpayer. The legislation provides for a guaranteed return on capital, for investment, in infrastructure, by distribution companies by designing a new alignment, the transmission company AusNet is raising the cost of the project, and therefore increasing their own return. Given the recent failure of towers due to wind on existing easements? Why isn't the focus on upgrading, existing infrastructure which clearly is required instead of expanding the infrastructure? And hence the earning capacity of the distributor.
- Not sure if anybody wants to comment on that, but that will certainly go through the team.

01:23:13.630 --> 01:23:21.189

Carolyn - Approvals Manager:

- I might take that a little bit, Jen, if in relation to the changes in the proposed route.
- one of the things that we have to do through the environment effects statement process and the approval process is to demonstrate how we have avoided and then minimised and then basically offset any potential environmental impacts. So if through the process, we're able to identify an alternative or an adjustment to the proposed route that reduces the environmental impacts then it's very important that we, A not only do it, but B demonstrate how we're making those changes.
- And that's where it becomes really important that the feedback, and the information that we get from the local community, including individual landholders is integrated into that approach. And that's one of the reasons that the proposed route has changed significantly with our field surveys. Once we've had people out into the field and seen the actual environmental values that we're trying to conserve. It is important

that we demonstrate to government that this is how we've made a change in the project and the proposed route to address those environmental impacts.

- The actual changing of the proposed route in terms of income or benefit that comes back to AusNet is not the basis for these changes. These changes are based on how we're impacting individual people's businesses and the environmental values out there in the physical environment.

01:25:01.040 --> 01:25:18.220

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator

- Thanks, Carolyn, and while you have the stage, if these lines have a land lifespan of 20 odd years, farm machinery is getting bigger and bigger. So this will be an ongoing and more frequent issue. Could you comment on strategies AusNet have in place in regards to this.

01:25:21.000 --> 01:25:47.690

Carolyn - Approvals Manager:

- Certainly, and the and the lifespan is longer than 20 years, and most of the transmission network that is out there at the moment has, and Dennis can probably comment on this more authoritatively than I can, but most of that is 40 50 years plus the key point is that there are updated Australian standards around transmission lines.
- And that's one of the reasons that we're having a minimum clearance of 15 metres for Western renewables link to take into account the change in farm machinery that we have seen over the last 40 to 50 years. That's one of the reasons that we're looking at that minimum clearance.
- So it is certainly being considered. It is certainly being understood. Similarly, for the Environment Effects Statement, we're looking at things like climate change and things that are much more immediate than are much longer term than just the immediate future. And certainly farming machinery and changes to machinery as well as where we're crossing railway lines, changes in freight distribution, those sorts of things, all of those things have to be considered.
- Denis, did you want to add any more to that.

01:26:37.750 --> 01:26:54.750

Denis - AusNet Easements Officer

- No, that's covered pretty well, Carolyn. But I think the main thing is that this line is being designed to make it future proof. It's certainly higher than most of our lines across the State. So that that's one of the key objectives.
- look at the equipment. Some of it could be coming larger. But it's also becoming a lot smarter, too. And you know, with electronic controls and guidance and all that sort of thing. Yeah, I think that this a lot of safety that's actually built into modern equipment, and we'll see much more of. And as Daryl said before, you know, even the use of drones is going to become increasing exponential rate.
- They're just getting bigger and bigger, and they'll be doing more and more things so. But I think that the new equipment will be so much smarter, and also that this line is designed for growth in the future. Certainly. And the comment about the age of the transmission lines. Well, we still have some transmission lines that were built in 1923. So they're 101 years old, and they still perform performing very well with the maintenance that we provide to them. So they are built for a long period.

01:27:57.940 --> 01:28:05.579

Jen Lilburn - independent facilitator:

- So I'm going to have to stop us there. We are finishing up right on 1230. There are 4 questions that we didn't get to. We do have the names of the people who asked all but the one about your potato farming background, Daryl, so that one will have to go through to the keeper. The others will be responded to directly to the questioner about economic impact, insurance, risks associated with burning stubble and the existing price project, and whether it's reassess the cost of upgrading the existing infrastructure, so they will go directly to the pay. The answers will go directly to the people who asked those questions, but I would like to thank you sincerely for your time today, for your interest and for your questions.
- We do appreciate. Your investment in this. In time. Today the webinar and the slide deck and the transcript will be available on the website. Please share it with your neighbours. If you have any other questions, please email that same email address from which you received the acknowledgement and reminder about today.
- To register for project updates. That is a slightly different email address, info at Western Renewables link, and so on. Please grab the landholder guide it is now available on the website, or you can get a copy from that same stakeholder engagement email address.
- today's webinar is being repeated tonight at 7 o'clock.

- We had, I think I saw the most about 38 participants throughout the the webinar today, so great strong interest, and no doubt the same numbers tonight. I'd like to thank all the presenters, Carolyn and Denis, Darryl and Mick, the back of house team, and of course all participants who have stayed through to the end,and have provided such fantastic questions.
- Thank you very much and enjoy the rest of your day.