

Media Release

The Hon Richard Wynne MP
Minister for Planning
Minister for Housing



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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR WESTERN VIC TRANSMISSION

The Victorian Government will ensure the potential environmental impacts of the Western Victoria Transmission Network Project will be fully and transparently assessed before the project goes ahead.

The Minister for Planning Richard Wynne today confirmed an Environment Effects Statement (EES) will be required for the project which aims to establish 200-kilometres of new high-voltage transmission lines across western Victoria to deliver more renewable energy into the state's electricity grid.

Starting in Bulgana in Victoria's west, the project would connect to Sydenham in Melbourne's north-west and establish a new terminal station north of Ballarat.

Existing energy transmission infrastructure in the state's west was not designed to accommodate the large-scale generation now being achieved by wind and solar, causing inefficiencies and congestion in the network.

The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) has contracted Mondo, the commercial arm of AusNet Services, to develop and build the Western Victoria Transmission Network Project. Mondo referred the project to the Minister for Planning to determine whether an EES was required.

The EES process is a rigorous environmental assessment framework for projects with the potential for significant environmental impacts. The process will enable transparent consideration of the project and provide several avenues for public feedback.

The EES will be completed by the proponent and will assess the comparative effects of different feasible routes, alignments, design and operational alternatives for the project – as well as the effectiveness of proposed measures to avoid, minimise and offset any environmental impacts.

Draft EES scoping requirements will be exhibited for public comment in the coming months. After public comments are considered, the Minister for Planning will finalise these requirements. Mondo will also be required to do an EES Consultation Plan to share information with the community and offer opportunities for feedback.

AEMO analysis found that by unlocking low-cost renewable energy generation, the Western Victoria Transmission Network Project would give benefits to consumers by 2024-25. The project would involve major economic investment in western Victoria, creating new jobs during and after construction.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Planning Richard Wynne

"While this project is important to the future of Victoria's power system, it's critical we assess its environmental effects to avoid or minimise impacts on the community or the environment."

"This will assess the proposed area between Bulgana and Sydenham through Victoria's most transparent and rigorous environmental assessment framework."

"The Victorian Government supports an efficient, modern, sustainable and affordable energy system – the EES process will tell us exactly where we stand and how we can move forward, it's important to get this right."

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