

DECISION ON PROJECT
Western Victoria Transmission Network Project
(Referral 2020R-011)

Decision under section 8B(3)(a) of the *Environment Effects Act 1978*

Assessment though an environment effects statement (EES) under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* **is required** for the reasons set out in the attached notice of reasons for decision.

Procedures and requirements under section 8B(5) of the *Environment Effects Act 1978*

The procedures and requirements applying to the EES process, in accordance with both section 8B(5) of the Act and the *Ministerial guidelines for assessment of environmental effects under the Environment Effects Act 1978* (Ministerial Guidelines), are as follows.

- (i) The EES is to document investigations of potential environmental effects of the proposed project, including the feasibility of associated environmental mitigation and management measures, in particular for:
 - a. alternative corridors, alignments, site locations, designs or other options for the planning, construction or operation of the project;
 - b. potential effects on biodiversity, including loss, degradation or fragmentation of habitat;
 - c. effects on Aboriginal and historic cultural heritage values;
 - d. impacts on visual and landscape values; and
 - e. other effects on land uses and the community.
- (ii) The matters to be investigated and documented in the EES will be set out more fully in scoping requirements. Draft scoping requirements will be exhibited for 15 business days for public comment, before final scoping requirements are issued by the Minister for Planning.
- (iii) The proponent is to prepare and submit to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) a draft EES study program to inform the preparation of scoping requirements.
- (iv) The level of detail of investigation for the EES studies should be consistent with the approach set out in the scoping requirements and be adequate to inform an assessment of the significance and acceptability of its potential environmental effects, in the context of the Ministerial Guidelines.
- (v) DELWP will convene an inter-agency technical reference group (TRG) to advise DELWP and the proponent on the scoping requirements, the design and adequacy of the EES studies and coordination with statutory approval processes.
- (vi) The proponent is to prepare and implement an EES consultation plan for informing the public and consulting with stakeholders during the preparation of the EES. The consultation plan will have regard to advice from DELWP and the TRG and address the continuing public health emergency and the implications of any changes in movement or other restrictions arising from the state of emergency.
- (vii) The proponent is also to prepare and submit to DELWP its proposed schedule for the completion of studies, preparation and exhibition of the EES, following confirmation of the scoping requirements. This schedule is intended to facilitate the alignment of the proponent's and DELWP's timeframes, including for TRG review of technical studies for the EES and the main EES documentation.
- (viii) The proponent is to apply appropriate peer review and quality management procedures to enable the completion of EES studies to a satisfactory standard.

- (ix) The EES is to be exhibited for a period of 30 business days for public comment, unless the exhibition period spans the Christmas–New Year period, in which case 40 business days will apply.
- (x) The required duration of the exhibition period may be revised in light of circumstances applying at the time the draft EES is submitted for adequacy review and authorisation to exhibit.
- (xi) The proponent is to follow any specific directions given by the Director Impact Assessment, DELWP, regarding advertising and exhibition arrangements, including with respect to giving advance notice of the intention to exhibit, provision of soft or hard copies of the exhibited EES to interested parties and the placement or otherwise of EES copies for viewing in public places.
- (xii) An inquiry will be appointed under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* to consider environmental effects of the proposal. The inquiry will be conducted by formal hearing, which may include the use of video-conferencing or other technology as the inquiry Chair deems appropriate.

Notification

The following parties (proponent and relevant decision-makers) are to be notified of this decision in accordance with sections 8A and 8B(4)(a)(i) of the *Environment Effects Act 1978*, as appropriate:

- Ausnet Transmission Group Pty. Ltd.;
- Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change;
- Secretary, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning;
- Executive Director, Aboriginal Victoria;
- Executive Director, Heritage Victoria;
- Environment Protection Authority;
- Parks Victoria;
- Ballarat City Council;
- Hepburn Shire Council;
- Melton Shire Council;
- Moorabool Shire Council;
- Northern Grampians Shire Council;
- Pyrenees Shire Council;
- Corangamite Catchment Management Authority;
- Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority;
- North Central Catchment Management Authority;
- Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority;
- Wimmera Catchment Management Authority;
- Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation;
- Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation;
- Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation;

- Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation; and
- Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.



HON RICHARD WYNNE MP
Minister for Planning

Date: 04 / 08 / 2020