

For public notice via internet

REASONS FOR DECISION UNDER *ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978*

Title of Proposal: Western Victoria Transmission Network Project

Proponent: Ausnet Transmission Group Pty. Ltd.

Description of project:

High voltage transmission powerline between existing terminal stations at Bulgana and Sydenham, operating at 220kV between Bulgana and a new terminal station north of Ballarat and at 500kV between Ballarat North and Sydenham. The project also includes new terminal stations north of Ballarat and adjacent to the existing Sydenham terminal station, and minor upgrades to existing terminal stations at Elaine and Ballarat.

Decision:

The Minister for Planning has decided that an environment effects statement (EES) is required for the Western Victoria Transmission Network Project, as described in the referral (No. 2020R-011) accepted on 19 June 2020.

Reasons for decision:

- The area of interest for the project supports significant environmental values, including native vegetation and ecological values, residential and agricultural and other land uses, heritage values, visual and landscape values and other social values, potential aggregate impacts on which are of at least regional significance.
- Multiple alignment and design alternatives for the project within the area of interest require rigorous and transparent assessment and refinement in relation to opportunities for avoidance and/or minimisation of potentially significant effects to inform both project and statutory decision-making.
- An EES process will provide a robust, transparent and integrated framework through which:
 - i. the project's potential environmental effects can be rigorously assessed, including in the context of the comparative effects of feasible siting, alignment, design and operational alternatives for key components of the project; and
 - ii. the effectiveness and acceptability of proposed measures to avoid, minimise, manage and offset environmental effects and related risks can be evaluated/ examined.
- An EES responds to community interest in project siting, alignment and design alternatives by providing appropriate opportunities for public input.

Date of decision: 04 / 08 / 2020