

High Voltage Transmission Line Setback Policy



Policy Type:	Council
Version:	1.0
Date Adopted:	22 December 2021
Service Unit	Major Developments
Directorate:	Community Planning and Economic Development
Review Date:	2023 (or earlier based on a change in circumstances)

1. Purpose

The purpose of the High-Voltage Transmission Line Setback Policy is to define the acceptable setback distance from high-voltage transmission line to dwellings and other sensitive receptors. The policy provides guidance and information for energy infrastructure proponents, operators, community members and other relevant stakeholders.

2. Definitions

MSC or Council	Moorabool Shire Council
AEIC	Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone
kV	Kilovolt
EMF	Electro-Magnetic Field
Setback distance	Required minimum distance between renewable energy infrastructure and an established residence or sensitive use
High voltage	High voltage is defined as a voltage > 1000 volts for alternating current, or at least 1500 volts for direct current
Sensitive receptors	Places where people reside for extended periods, such as schools, hospitals and aged care facilities

3. Scope

Moorabool Shire currently houses three wind farms with almost 200 turbines between them. The renewable energy facilities were constructed between 2018 to 2021. Moorabool also forms part of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP's) Western Victoria Renewable Energy Zone (REZ). It is one of six zones in their REZ Development Plan (Directions Paper published February 2021), which earmarks potential projects across the state to achieve Victoria's renewable energy transformation. The existing and prospective renewable energy infrastructure projects highlight a requirement for Council to adopt a policy position on transmission infrastructure.

This policy has been developed using the most recent energy infrastructure setback recommendations handed down in the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner's 2020 Annual Report (published 28 October 2021).

High Voltage Transmission Line Setback Policy



4. Non-Compliance

It is important to note that this is the policy statement for Moorabool Shire area only.

This policy will be actively considered when determining and making submissions to projects that involve high voltage transmission lines. The consequential actions of Council in response to a non-compliance with this policy will be considered on a project-by-project basis.

5. Policy

While Moorabool Shire acknowledges the importance of renewable energy projects and is supportive of the transition to renewable energy, Council has justifiable concerns regarding the significant impacts of energy infrastructure on the community. There is increasing anecdotal evidence and autonomous research suggesting a potential connection between adverse health impacts and long-term radiation exposure from high voltage energy infrastructure.

Furthermore, Moorabool has a strong local identity associated with picturesque farmland and distinctive nature-based assets that hold significant landscape values. Unsightly transmission infrastructure traversing these landscapes directly conflicts with Moorabool's visual amenity and liveability. Likewise, private land impacts due to transmission line easements and access tracks may unnecessarily restrict current and future growth and land use; particularly for agricultural properties, which is an industry of local specialisation.

Council specifically seeks to limit the potential impacts on visual amenity, existing and future land uses, as well as adverse effects on human health resulting from EMF emissions characteristic of high voltage transmission infrastructure.

The current policy has been developed in response to the current lack of government sanctioned and peer reviewed research regarding appropriate setback distances from high voltage transmission lines.

The Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner (AEIC) has made a number of recommendations to address the differences in design and governance of renewable energy projects across Australian states and territories. They acknowledge and seek to mitigate potential adverse impacts of renewable energy infrastructure, including high voltage transmission lines, on human health, visual amenity and peaceful enjoyment of private property. The recommendations provide a framework for a consistent approach and expectations for governments, industry, and the community, towards achieving more equitable community outcomes and driving technological improvements across the energy market.

High Voltage Transmission Line Setback Policy

5.1. High Voltage Transmission Line Setback Policy

MSC adopts recommendation 5.2.9.5 of the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner's 2020 Annual Report, which states:

- In relation to proposed transmission lines, a transmission line that is less than 220 kV should have a setback distance of 100 metres from a residence, while a powerline that is 220 kV or greater should have a setback distance of 200 metres.
- Transmission lines should also be set back from public roads, with the suggested setback distance of the transmission line towers measured as the tower height plus 20 metres.

6. Council Plan Reference

Objectives: Liveable and Thriving Environments
Context: Develop planning mechanisms to enhance liveability in the Shire

7. Review

As a minimum, this policy will be reviewed every second year or earlier based on a change in circumstances.