

# Farming and electricity transmission

For more than half a century, Victoria's regional towns and many of Melbourne's metropolitan communities have lived and worked in and around major electricity transmission.

Transmission powerlines transport electricity from where it's generated, historically at power stations that burn coal, to homes and businesses.

Australia has not needed to build major new power transmission lines in decades, but as coal plants retire and our energy system transitions to clean, renewable energy, new transmission lines are needed.

The prospect of hosting new transmission lines has raised concerns among some regional and farming communities as well as questions about how it will impact farming and agricultural activities.

The following is a list of frequently asked questions that we've heard from communities.

## Key Facts – Electricity Transmission

### Q: Why are VNI West and the Western Renewables Link transmission lines needed?



The rapid retirement of major coal-fired power plants has created an urgent need for new infrastructure. Renewable energy sources are growing rapidly, and these two critical projects will build the new transmission lines needed to link renewable generators such as solar and wind farms to the power grid.

They will help ensure reliable, affordable power by boosting the ability to share energy between states, linking Victoria to the Snowy 2.0 deep energy storage project in New South Wales and helping to fill the energy supply gap with cleaner electricity as coal plants close.

### Q: How high will the transmission towers be for VNI West?



The transmission towers are expected to be between 60 metres and 80 metres high in areas, similar to the towers you see driving into Melbourne. The easement for VNI West will be about 100 metres wide to allow access for maintenance and for safety control measures.

### Q: How long will the spans be between the towers?



The distance between each tower will be roughly 450 meters, however this may vary with the terrain.

### Q: Are the easements under the powerlines fenced off?



Line easements are not normally fenced.

### Q: What are you allowed to do under the powerlines?



Farmers can run livestock, grow cereal and many other food crops within transmission line easements. Orchards and market gardens can be planted and tended within easements and a range of irrigation systems can also operate with height restrictions.

In addition, heavy vehicles and equipment such as headers up to about 5m high can travel and operate under the 500kV transmission lines.

In many instances, having extra high voltage transmission lines is less disruptive for farmers compared to lower voltage towers, because the taller towers allow for bigger machinery and even irrigation to operate.

### Q: How big is the base of the tower?



The tower will cover an area in the range of 15 x 15 metres or 20 x 20 metres, depending on the tower type and design.

### Q: Will I be compensated if the transmission lines require new machinery or other related costs?



We will work hard to minimise the impacts on existing farming and agricultural activities. However, where new transmission lines require farming business practices to be modified, such as remapping of GPS, the cost of undertaking this work will be covered by the project.

### Q: How can fires be fought near transmission lines?



Ensuring communities and farms can operate safely around transmission lines is a key priority and that includes a number of measures in relation to fire risk.

The Victorian Energy Safety Commission has recently published a [guide to bushfire management and community safety around transmission lines](#).

This addresses a range of concerns, including how the companies that own and maintain transmission lines work with fire authorities to ensure that aerial fire fighting is possible in the vicinity of transmission lines.

**For more information** on land access and farming under transmission lines check out the following links:

[Landholder guide to easements access and compensation](#)

[Electricity transmission company land access statement of expectations: Essential Services Commission](#)