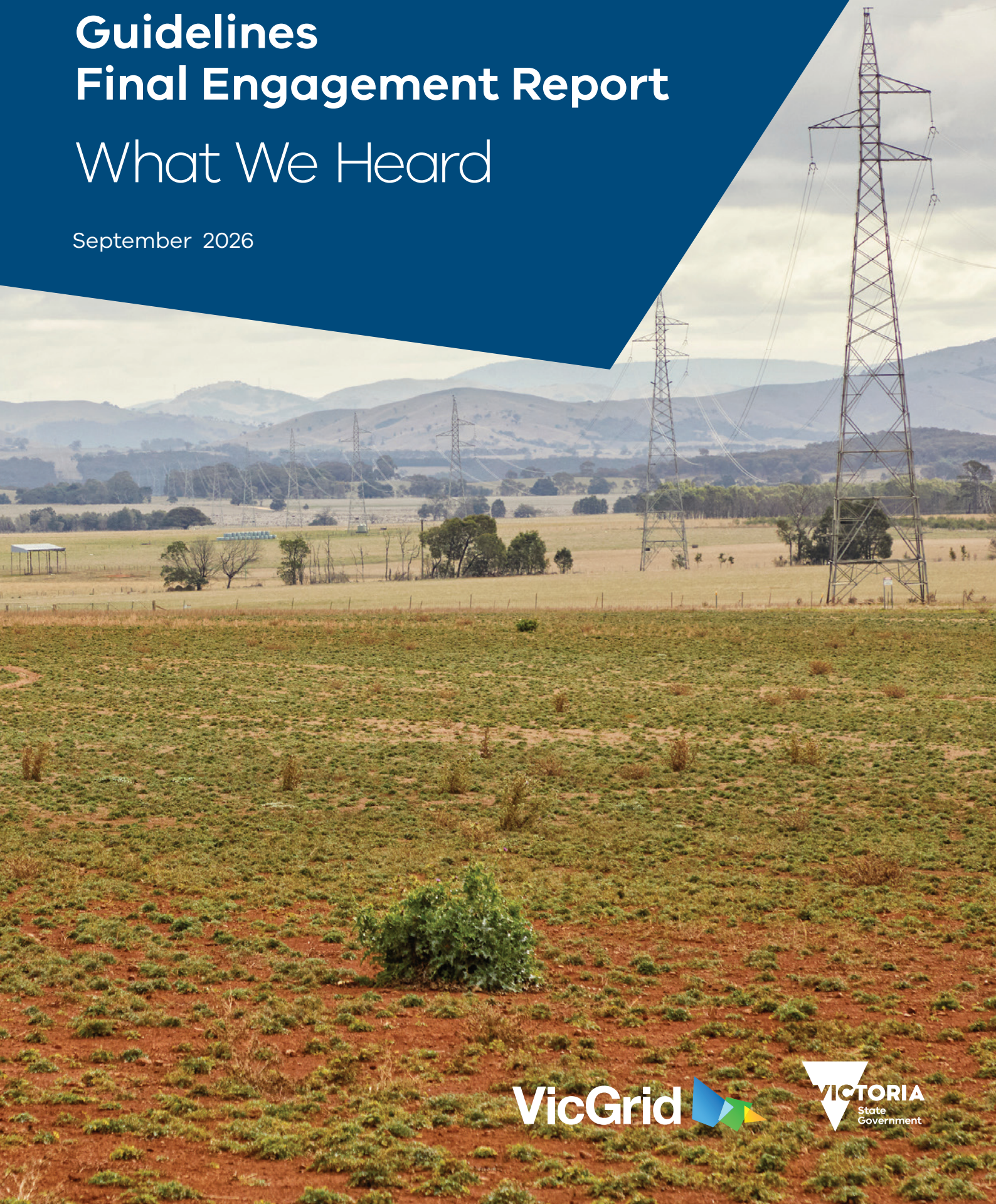


2026 Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines Final Engagement Report What We Heard

September 2026





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Maddi Moser (Taungurung artist), 'Every Step Matters', 2025

Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners

We acknowledge and respect Victoria's Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We are committed to genuinely partnering and meaningfully engaging with Victoria's Traditional Owners and First Peoples to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.



Executive summary

Victoria's energy system is undergoing a once-in-a-generation transformation as ageing coal-fired power stations retire and are replaced by renewable energy generation, storage and supporting transmission infrastructure. To maintain reliable, affordable and secure electricity, Victoria needs long-term planning for where future energy infrastructure may be needed and how it can be delivered.

The Victorian Transmission Plan is Victoria's long-term plan for renewable energy zones and transmission infrastructure. The first Victorian Transmission Plan was published in 2025. The 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan will extend the planning horizon from 15 years to 25 years, as required by legislation. It will build on the 2025 plan and reflect changes in energy demand, technology, policy and market conditions.

The 2026 Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines explain how VicGrid will prepare the 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan. They set out the planning approach, assumptions, modelling and engagement activities that will guide its development.

Between 29 May and 26 June 2026, VicGrid consulted on the draft guidelines. This included webinars, briefings, meetings and a written submission process. VicGrid received 38 written submissions and held more than 60 meetings, briefings and webinars with communities, Traditional Owners, industry, local government and government agencies.



Most submissions supported long-term transmission planning and raised several common issues. These included:



- Planning for uncertainty and delivery risks
- Future electricity demand, particularly from data centres and electrification
- Agricultural land use and farm impacts
- Biodiversity and environmental values
- Community trust, transparency and engagement
- Regional economic impacts and benefits
- The role of transmission, distribution and non-network solutions

Following consultation, VicGrid has made targeted updates to the guidelines. Key changes include:



- Clearer explanation of how feedback will help shape the 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan
- Updates to reflect the Australian Energy Market Operator's final 2026 Integrated System Plan
- Additional emphasis on sensitivity testing and uncertainty
- Stronger recognition of agricultural and land-use considerations
- Clearer description of how VicGrid will monitor changes between planning cycles
- Updated wording regarding the treatment of projects identified through the 2025 plan

Many issues raised through consultation, including renewable energy zone development, transmission project options, detailed modelling assumptions, hosting capacity and non-network solutions, will be considered through the development of the 2027 plan rather than through changes to the guidelines themselves. We will use this feedback to shape the 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan.

Introduction

Victoria's energy system is undergoing significant change as ageing coal-fired generation retires and new renewable generation, storage and transmission infrastructure are developed.

The draft 2026 Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines explain how VicGrid will prepare the 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan and identify future transmission needs to support Victoria's transition to renewable energy. The 2027 plan will provide a 25-year roadmap for renewable energy zones and transmission infrastructure across Victoria.

The 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan builds on work already completed through the 2025 plan. It is the next stage in Victoria's ongoing transmission planning framework. The 2025 plan established the initial renewable energy zones and transmission pathways required to support the energy transition to 2040. The 2027 plan will build on that work, incorporate updated information and analysis, and extend the planning horizon to 25 years to support long-term decision-making.



Consultation

The draft 2026 Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines were released for consultation to seek feedback on the methodology, assumptions and planning approach that will be used to develop the 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan. The guidelines set out the framework for preparing the plan, setting out the scenarios, inputs, assumptions, planning methods and engagement processes that VicGrid will use to identify Victoria's future renewable energy and transmission infrastructure needs.

We consulted on the draft guidelines to:

- Gather feedback on the proposed planning approach
- Understand stakeholder priorities and concerns
- Strengthen the final guidelines before publication

VicGrid invited feedback on the draft 2026 Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines between 29 May and 26 June 2026.

Engagement opportunities included community and industry webinars, meetings and briefings, engagement with Victoria's Registered Aboriginal Parties, one-on-one meetings with developers, and a written submission process.

Consultation on the draft 2026 Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines was the first step in the development of the 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan. While not all feedback resulted in changes to the guidelines, every submission helped shape our understanding of community, industry and Traditional Owner priorities and will guide the development of the 2027 plan.

Feedback received through this process will help shape future transmission planning, including the refresh of VicGrid's strategic land use assessment and the identification and assessment of any potential future renewable energy zones to be considered in the 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan. Where future investigations identify potential new areas for renewable energy development, VicGrid will undertake further targeted engagement with communities, Traditional Owners, landholders, local government, industry and other stakeholders before decisions are made. As the 2027 plan is developed, VicGrid will continue to engage openly and transparently, ensuring that insights from both past and ongoing consultation help shape and guide future planning and decision-making.

During the consultation period, VicGrid held

36 meetings and briefings with community members, industry, Traditional Owners, local government and government agencies

25 meetings with renewable energy developers

2 community webinars

1 industry webinar

VicGrid recieved

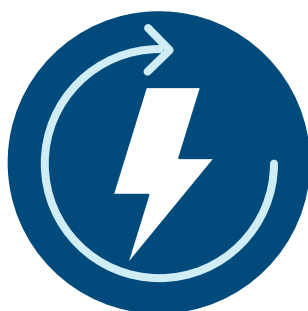
38 written submissions

What we heard

People shared a range of views on Victoria's energy transition and future transmission needs. Common themes included:



**Planning for uncertainty
and delivery risk**



**Future electricity demand,
particularly data centres and
electrification**



**Agricultural productivity
and land use**



**Cumulative impacts on
communities and regions**



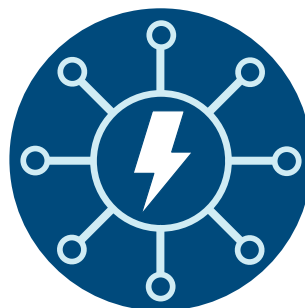
**Biodiversity and
environmental values**



**Community trust,
transparency and engagement**



**Regional economic outcomes
and benefit sharing**



**Integration of transmission,
distribution and non-network
solutions**



Community, local government and agricultural feedback

Community, agricultural stakeholders and local government were generally supportive of the need for long-term transmission planning, while emphasising the importance of minimising impacts on agricultural land, communities and the environment.

Many people said transmission planning must better consider agricultural and farming businesses. Several submissions also emphasised the importance of reliable, affordable and secure electricity throughout the energy transition and highlighted the need to provide clearer information about how costs and benefits are shared across communities, consumers, industry and regions.

There were also calls for stronger consideration of regional economic development, workforce opportunities, community infrastructure, benefit sharing and long-term regional outcomes.

Feedback emphasised the importance of:

- Protecting productive agricultural land
- Maintaining farm viability
- Considering cumulative impacts of renewable energy and transmission infrastructure
- Recognising regional economic and social impacts
- Balancing energy infrastructure with other land uses

Many submissions highlighted concerns about cumulative impacts on communities, industries and landscapes, particularly in regions already experiencing significant renewable energy development.

Submissions called for stronger consideration of:

- Community wellbeing
- Regional infrastructure pressures
- Housing and workforce availability
- Water resources
- Long-term regional development outcomes

Several submissions highlighted the importance of building and maintaining community trust through:

- Clear communication
- Transparent decision-making
- Meaningful engagement
- Visible consideration of stakeholder feedback

Submissions also highlighted the biodiversity, native vegetation, environmental values and cumulative impacts on landscapes and ecosystems.



Traditional Owner feedback

Traditional Owners emphasised the importance of continuing to strengthen partnerships and ensuring cultural values are considered throughout transmission planning.

Key themes included:

- Protecting Country and cultural heritage
- Supporting self-determination and meaningful participation
- Improving cultural mapping and early engagement
- Ensuring Traditional Owners have opportunities to influence planning outcomes
- Recognising cultural, environmental and community values together

Traditional Owners also noted the importance of appropriate resourcing and capacity to support meaningful participation in planning processes.

Industry feedback

Industry submissions were generally supportive of the overall Victorian Transmission Plan framework and Victoria's long-term planning approach.

A common theme was the need to give greater weight to uncertainty and delivery risk. Many submissions recommended broader scenario testing, including potential delays to transmission infrastructure, offshore wind development and future generation projects.

Many submissions also called for greater transparency about future electricity demand assumptions, particularly for data centres, electrification and large industrial loads. Industry participants emphasised the importance of keeping demand forecasts realistic, transparent and responsive to changing market conditions.

Industry participants also identified opportunities to improve coordination across:

- Transmission planning
- Distribution networks
- Renewable energy zones
- Storage
- Community energy
- Non-network solutions

Several submissions highlighted the importance of giving investors greater certainty through clear assessment methods, transparent assumptions and alignment with related reforms, including the Victorian Access Regime.



What we did

While some feedback has resulted in changes to the guidelines, many issues raised relate to decisions that will be considered through the development of the 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan itself or through other VicGrid policies.

The key updates are:



Explanation of how feedback will be used

Many submissions called for greater transparency around how community and industry feedback influences decision-making. In addition to what is outlined in this document, the guidelines now include a summary of stakeholder feedback received to date. The consultation insights will be considered alongside technical analysis in developing the 2027 plan, and the guidelines outline opportunities for stakeholder input throughout the planning process.



Updated planning assumptions and scenario inputs

The guidelines have been updated to reflect the release of the Australian Energy Market Operator's final 2026 Integrated System Plan, including updates to relevant assumptions and references. While the three core scenarios remain unchanged, the guidelines provide additional clarity on key assumptions and inputs used in scenario development, including in relation to demand forecasts and data centres. The guidelines have also been updated to reflect that scenarios will be weighted to inform the selection of the optimal development pathway.



Clearer explanation of how uncertainty and future risks will be treated

The guidelines now provide additional information on how scenarios and targeted sensitivity testing will be used to assess uncertainty and support the development of a robust Victorian Transmission Plan.



Stronger recognition of agricultural and land-use impacts

Many submissions highlighted concerns about the impact of renewable energy infrastructure on agricultural land and farming businesses. In response, the guidelines provide greater clarity about how agricultural and land-use impacts will be considered through the Strategic Land Use Assessment, Multi-Criteria Analysis and ongoing consultation during the development of the 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan. The cost-benefit analysis will also consider economic, social and environmental impacts where they can be quantified.



Clearer explanation of how VicGrid will respond to change

The guidelines now emphasise VicGrid's role in monitoring between Victorian Transmission Plan cycles. This will ensure the ability to respond to material changes in market conditions, technology, policy settings, and demand. The guidelines also highlight how the benefits of adaptive planning and flexibility will be considered through the design and testing of candidate development pathways.



Refined treatment of 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan projects

The guidelines have been updated to clarify how projects identified through the 2025 plan will be considered as inputs to the 2027 plan. The revised wording recognises that previous decisions provide a starting point for analysis while retaining flexibility to reassess projects where conditions or assumptions have materially changed.



Matters to be addressed through the 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan

Several themes raised during consultation are more appropriately considered through the development of the 2027 plan rather than through changes to the guidelines. VicGrid appreciates the detailed submissions received on these issues, which have provided valuable insights that will support ongoing work, engagement and assessment throughout the development of the 2027 plan.

These include:

- Potential new renewable energy zone sizing, boundaries and hosting capacity
- Assessment of specific renewable energy zone locations and transmission corridors
- Non-network solutions and storage options
- Detailed scenario and sensitivity testing
- Data centre demand and large-load forecasting
- Adaptive planning triggers and governance arrangements
- Detailed cost-benefit analysis and economic assessment methodologies
- Community, social and regional impacts

Matters to be addressed in other areas

Not all of the feedback provided directly relates to the Victorian Transmission Plan but is relevant to other areas of VicGrid's work. Feedback relating to regional development and community benefits is currently being incorporated into work on the Renewable Energy Zone Community Benefits Plan and the implementation of the Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines in the Victorian Access Regime. There was also feedback about the Victorian Access Regime and the Grid Impact Assessment, which are currently being integrated into work on these areas.



Next steps

Feedback received during consultation has been used to refine the final 2026 Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines and will continue to shape the development of the 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan. VicGrid will now begin the analysis outlined in the guidelines, including reviewing future energy demand, assessing generation and storage requirements, and identifying transmission infrastructure needed to support Victoria's energy transition.

As part of this work, VicGrid will assess whether the currently declared renewable energy zones can meet Victoria's future energy needs over the 25-year planning horizon. Where additional renewable generation and storage capacity is required, the 2027 plan may identify potential new areas for further investigation and consultation. If future analysis identifies potential new areas for renewable energy generation, storage or transmission infrastructure, VicGrid will undertake further consultation with affected communities, Traditional Owners, landholders, local government and industry before decisions are made.

There will be further opportunities to provide feedback during the development of the draft 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan and, where relevant, through any future renewable energy zone declaration processes.

VicGrid will continue to engage with:

- Communities
- Traditional Owners
- Landholders
- Local government
- Industry
- Other stakeholders

Insights gathered through this and previous consultations will help guide future planning, including consideration of land-use factors, environmental and cultural values, community impacts, regional opportunities and Victoria's future electricity needs.

The 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan will build on this feedback to identify transmission solutions that support Victoria's energy transition while balancing environmental, cultural, social and economic considerations.



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