

Assessing environmental impacts

September 2025



Victoria's energy system is changing. We urgently need to change our power grid to carry energy from new renewable sources and batteries across the state to Victorian homes, businesses, hospitals, schools and other vital services.

VicGrid is developing the shared transmission line to connect offshore wind energy generated off the Gippsland coast to the grid. In March 2024, VicGrid confirmed the offshore wind transmission study area and connection hub area. The study area begins approximately 6 km from the coast near Giffard and travels north-west past Stradbroke West to Willung, across to Flynn's Creek and then to the Loy Yang Power Station.

This factsheet outlines how VicGrid will assess the potential environmental impacts of the project and how input from Traditional Owners and First Peoples, landholders, communities and local stakeholders plays a key role in preparation of the assessment.

Major infrastructure projects, such as building transmission lines, are assessed under local, state and Commonwealth laws to ensure environmental impacts are appropriately identified and managed.

In October 2024, the Victorian Minister for Planning declared the works proposed by VicGrid to be 'public works' under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (Vic). This means that VicGrid is required to prepare an Environment Effects Statement (EES).

What is an Environment Effects Statement (EES)?

An EES is a comprehensive investigation of a project's potential environmental, social, economic and cultural impacts and informs decision-makers about what can be done to manage or mitigate those impacts.

What is included in an EES?

An EES usually includes:

- a project description, including an overview of the project, its location, its timeline and what alternative options have been considered
- existing environmental, social and cultural context that may be potentially affected
- a summary of community and stakeholder consultation undertaken during the preparation of the EES and key issues raised
- potential environmental effects of the proposed project
- proposed measures to avoid, minimise or manage the potential environmental effects
- a proposed program to monitor and manage the environmental effects during and after project construction.



What is assessed in the EES?

Matters to be investigated and documented in the EES are based on the scoping requirements approved by the Minister for Planning. The technical assessments that respond to the Scoping Requirements and inform the EES, will impact the project's final location and design.

The draft scoping requirements were publicly exhibited from 20 March to 10 April 2025, inviting feedback from First Peoples, landholders, communities and relevant agencies.

The final scoping requirements were approved by the Minister for Planning in July 2025 following the Department of Transport and Planning's review of public submissions.

The project will assess the following matters:

Biodiversity and ecological values

- Native vegetation, including threatened species
- Threatened fauna and habitats
- Geology and soils, including soil contamination
- Groundwater and surface water

Amenity and socio-economic

- Landscape and visual amenity
- Socio-economic values and land uses, including agriculture, forestry and local communities

Heritage

- Aboriginal cultural heritage
- Historic heritage

Infrastructure and planning

- Technical feasibility
- Land use and planning, including agriculture and forestry
- Traffic and transport
- Electromagnetic interference and electromagnetic fields (also known as EMFs)
- Bushfire



Types of investigations that inform the EES

VicGrid are conducting studies and assessments as part of the EES process, including:

- Reviewing desktop information – we investigate existing data, reports and maps to understand the environmental, social and cultural context of the project.
 - On-site surveys – specialists visit the project area to observe and collect information about flora, fauna, water, soil, air quality, and land use.
 - Technical analysis – we analyse data and models using simulations and specialist tools. For example, we might use a three-dimensional model to understand the visual impact of new towers on the landscape.
 - Consulting people who live and work in the project area – we seek to understand local concerns and assess the social impacts of the project through workshops with local stakeholder groups or community surveys.
- Economic and social analysis – we look at data about the local economy and community feedback to understand potential benefits or opportunities, for example how many jobs the project will create. We also try to understand how the project will impact communities and ways to reduce or avoid those impacts.

Other environmental approvals

Preparation of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan is required under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic) to assess the project's potential impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage. Planning permission is also required under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic).

Assessing Commonwealth protected species

VicGrid has also submitted a referral to the Commonwealth Government under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999* (Cth) to evaluate the potential impacts on matters of national environmental significance.

In November 2024, the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water assessed the referral and determined the project is a Controlled Action which means it requires assessment and approval under the EPBC Act.

A Controlled Action refers to a project or activity with a potential to significantly impact matters of national environmental significance, such as listed threatened and migratory species.

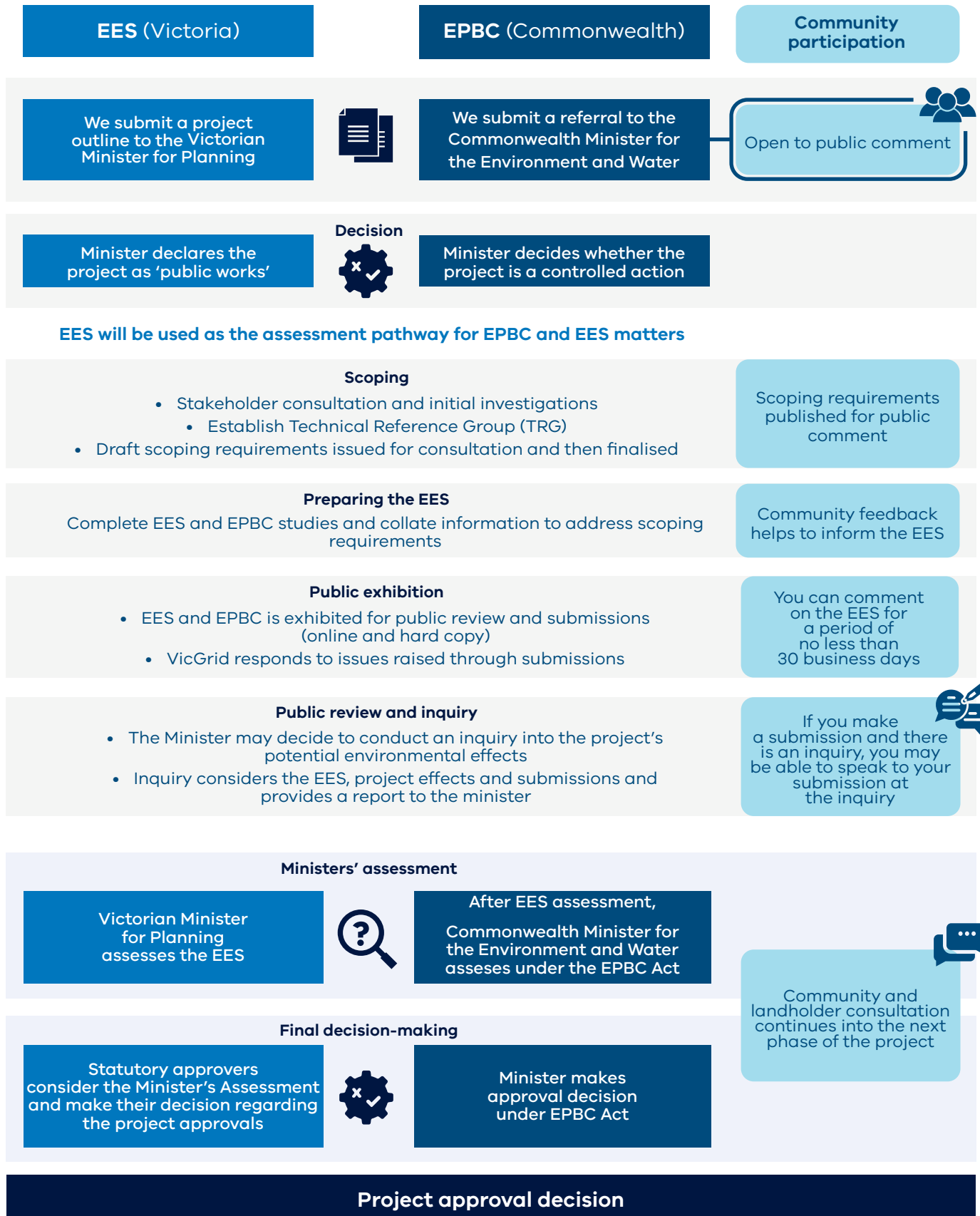
To learn more about the EPBC referral process and view VicGrid's referral, visit epbcpbpublicportal.environment.gov.au

Assessing EES and EPBC together

The Victorian and Commonwealth Governments have a bilateral agreement that enables projects requiring both EES and EPBC assessments, to undergo a single assessment process. This approach helps avoid duplicating technical studies and streamlines assessment processes.

Process for EES and EPBC Approval

The Environment Effects Statement (Victoria) and Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (Commonwealth Government) processes for a public works project is outlined below.



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How consultation and feedback will inform the EES

Your insights are important to the preparation of the EES and contribute to our understanding of local environmental and social values.

We will continue to keep you informed about opportunities to contribute to the EES through our website, e-news, social media and at public events.

EES consultation plan

We've prepared an EES consultation plan which outlines how we are consulting, sharing information and seek feedback during the EES process, available on the VicGrid website.

The EES consultation plan outlines:

- the people and groups we are consulting with during the EES process
- our consultation methods and engagement activities
- how we're recording, considering and reporting on consultation activities.

Technical Reference Group (TRG)

A project TRG has been convened by the Department of Transport and Planning to advise on the preparation of the EES and ensure potential impacts are properly addressed.

Members of TRGs include representatives from state government departments and agencies, regional authorities, local government and Traditional Owner Corporations.

The TRG meets regularly to discuss and respond to ongoing information and issues provided by VicGrid during the EES process.

Sign up for EES updates

To stay updated on our latest EES news and events, follow us on Facebook and LinkedIn or sign up for our newsletter at energy.vic.gov.au/renewable-energy/vicgrid

Contact us



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ISBN 978-1-76176-395-3 (Print)

ISBN 978-1-76176-396-0 (pdf/online/MS word)

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