

The first Victorian Transmission Plan – Stakeholder Pack

November 2023



Overview

About this pack

This stakeholder pack provides an overview of the engagement for Victoria's first Transmission Plan. It includes:

- Information about the project and community engagement process
- Details of upcoming engagement opportunities
- Frequently Asked Questions, social media and newsletter promotion templates to help you share information about the project with your community.

Developing the first Victorian Transmission Plan

Victoria is undergoing a transition to renewable energy.

As our ageing and increasingly unreliable coal-fired power stations retire and are replaced by renewables, our electricity grid needs to evolve. New transmission infrastructure will be critical to moving high volumes of energy from the new areas where it is generated, to homes and businesses where it will be used.

The Victorian Government has established VicGrid to plan future major electricity transmission infrastructure and coordinate the state's Renewable Energy Zones (REZs), the areas with the greatest potential for renewable energy development.

VicGrid is leading reforms to how we plan future transmission and Renewable Energy Zones to ensure that cheaper, more reliable renewable energy can be delivered to homes and businesses across the state.

As part of the reforms, VicGrid will develop the first state-wide **Victorian Transmission Plan** by mid-2025.

This Plan will include a 15-year outlook for transmission infrastructure projects needed to meet the state's electricity system needs and unlock Renewable Energy Zones.

It will determine the appropriate level of renewable energy development across Victoria based on balancing a range of factors, including system needs, environmental factors, cost, land use and community views.

It will ensure we are building the right infrastructure in the right places and that we are not building more than we need.

State-wide Strategic Land Use Assessment

An important first step in building the Victorian Transmission Plan is to identify "Renewable Energy Zone Priority Areas".

These are geographical areas that could be appropriate for the development of generation, storage and transmission. They are a starting point from which further investigation and planning for Renewable Energy Zones can be undertaken. To help identify Priority Areas, VicGrid is conducting a state-wide energy-specific Strategic Land Use Assessment (or SLUA).

The purpose of this assessment is to help guide where Renewable Energy Zone development should occur across the state, considering a range of land use, engineering, environmental, cultural and social factors. It will also consider local and regional values and preferences, to minimise local community impacts and maximise opportunities for regions to benefit from Renewable Energy Zone development.

The result of this state-wide assessment will be a high-level view of the suitability of land for potentially hosting renewable energy generation and transmission. The outcomes of this assessment will help to avoid or minimise impacts to areas that are considered highly sensitive or significant.

Community at the heart of our planning process

As we start, VicGrid is asking Victorians, and particularly those living in regional communities, to share their views towards renewable energy and transmission development, as well as their local knowledge about your region and values important to you.

Feedback will be used to do a high-level assessment of the suitability of land for co-existence with future renewable energy generation and transmission.

This suitability assessment will be used to decide draft 'Renewable Energy Zone Priority Areas', which we will then share with the community and stakeholders for further feedback.

Please note this is the first stage of engagement to develop the Victorian Transmission Plan. There will be many more opportunities for engagement with community and stakeholders throughout 2024 and 2025.

How people can participate:

- Complete the Renewable Energy Planning Survey.
- Use an interactive map to show us important land uses
- Register to attend an event to learn more about the project and give feedback.

These opportunities can be accessed at www.engage.vic.gov.au/victransmissionplan

Accessible engagement

VicGrid understands that not everyone can or wants to engage online. There a variety of other ways people can give their feedback including:

- Requesting a hard copy survey with a reply-paid envelope.
- Requesting to complete the survey or interactive map over the phone.
- Finding out what community events we will be at in their area to come and talk to someone face-to-face.
- Attending a face-to-face workshop or drop-in in March.

To organise one of the above people can contact us via **1800 418 341** or rezdevelopment@delwp.vic.gov.au

Feedback from stakeholders

If you feel the Renewable Energy Planning Survey and interactive map do not provide sufficient opportunity to provide your input, you can email information through to rezdevelopment@delwp.vic.gov.au.

Stakeholders can also attend a webinar on the 30 November 2023 or request a briefing with VicGrid.

Promoting the engagement

VicGrid would greatly appreciate it if you could help promote the engagement for the first Victorian Transmission Plan.

We have a template social media and newsletter content on the following pages. We have also provided a fact sheet and social media tile with this stakeholder pack.

If you have any questions about the engagement or need to direct community to VicGrid for further information, please contact rezdevelopment@delwp.vic.gov.au or **1800 418 341**.

Social media

VicGrid is developing the first Victorian Transmission Plan.

As we start, we want to understand your views towards renewable energy development and transmission, and what is most important to you in your local area.

Complete their survey and interactive map.

Find out more and get involved at: www.engage.vic.gov.au/victransmissionplan

Newsletters

Victoria is undergoing a transition to renewable energy.

As Victoria's ageing and increasingly unreliable coal-fired power stations retire and are replaced by renewables, our electricity grid needs to evolve.

The Victorian Government is now developing the first state-wide Victorian Transmission Plan.

They want to want to understand your views towards renewable energy development and transmission, and what is most important to your region.

You can learn more and provide your feedback at www.engage.vic.gov.au/victransmissionplan

You can also find out www.engage.vic.gov.au/victransmissionplan more by calling 1800 418 341 or emailing rezdevelopment@delwp.vic.gov.au

Frequently Asked Questions

Why does Victoria need to build new transmission?

Energy is an essential service and Victoria is undergoing a transition to renewable energy. The transition is crucial to keep Victoria's lights on and the state's economy powered as our ageing and increasingly unreliable coal-fired power stations retire.

To make this possible, our electricity transmission system also needs to evolve.

Victoria's electricity grid is historically strongest in the Latrobe Valley, where coal-fired power stations are based. However, renewable resources are dispersed across Victoria. New transmission infrastructure is critical to moving high volumes of energy from new areas where it is generated, to homes and businesses where it will be used.

How will new transmission support Victoria's clean energy transition?

As Victoria's ageing and increasingly unreliable coal-fired power stations retire, more renewables, paired with battery storage, will provide the state's electricity as part of our clean energy transition.

Victoria's grid is historically the strongest in the Latrobe Valley, where our coal-fired power stations are based. However, our renewable resources are dispersed across Victoria, from our windy coastlines to our sunny plains.

That's why we are working on transmission and network upgrades across the state. This will improve and modernise the grid in the areas where sun and wind are abundant so more renewables can flow through Victoria. This will deliver a cleaner, cheaper, stronger energy system for all Victorians.

Who is VicGrid?

VicGrid is a division in the Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA). It coordinates the overarching planning and development of Victoria's Renewable Energy Zones (REZs).

This includes stepping in to coordinate new transmission infrastructure to reduce impacts as much as possible and create benefits for landholders, local communities and Traditional Owners. VicGrid is implementing the Victorian Transmission Investment Framework (VTIF) and developing the first Victorian Transmission Plan (VTP).

What are Renewable Energy Zones?

Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) are areas in our state with the greatest potential for renewable energy, such as wind and solar. Developing these clean energy resources at scale, and in a coordinated way with the batteries and high-voltage wires required to store and transport electricity, will support Victoria's energy future and ensure access to clean and reliable electricity.

I have seen Renewable Energy Zones already drawn on a map. How do these relate?

VicGrid has, over the past three years, talked about six Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) in Victoria. These were areas previously identified by the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) in its national Integrated System Plan as candidate Renewable Energy Zone areas with high potential for renewable energy development.

Through the Victorian Transmission Plan process, VicGrid will identify and eventually define Victorian Renewable Energy Zones which best meet the state's needs and the objectives of the Plan. When needed, a Renewable Energy Zone will be officially declared with defined boundaries for where infrastructure can be developed following the publication of the new Plan. AEMO's candidate Renewable Energy Zones are indicative areas for potential REZs in Victoria but do not represent official REZ areas.

How will the information I provide be used?

Victorians across the state are being asked to complete the Renewable Energy Planning Survey and to map important places in their region by 31 January 2024. Both the online survey and interactive map are aimed at understanding community views and values at the start of the planning process to ensure this helps shape how Victoria plans Renewable Energy Zones.

Will there be more than one opportunity to provide feedback?

This Land Assessment will be delivered over several stages to support REZ development. The first stage, underway now, is a critical starting point for developing the Victorian Transmission Plan. It will identify REZ priority areas, which are broad geographical areas across Victoria that are most appropriate to further investigate and plan for the future development of renewable energy generation, storage and transmission infrastructure.

In 2024, VicGrid will share outcomes of this engagement, and let you know how we have used

your input in assessing land for renewable energy development.

There will be further opportunities to provide feedback as we develop the first Victorian Transmission Plan. Over the next two years, VicGrid will focus on areas best suited for REZ development and identify any additional transmission projects needed to meet our energy needs. As areas for future development become more focused, we will implement further phases of engagement so that local communities, landholders and Traditional Owners can continue to have their say during the process.

I have previously fed into a transmission planning survey and online map. Have you reviewed my previous feedback?

VicGrid is aware that community consultation is already underway in some parts of Victoria for some critical near-term transmission projects, such as offshore wind transmission in Gippsland and Portland, and the Western Renewables Link and Victoria New South Wales Interconnector West projects.

Where relevant, VicGrid will consider broader data available through similar survey exercises and recent engagements as additional information in the state-wide Strategic Land Use Assessment.

While VicGrid will aim to access other information collected by organisations other than VicGrid, we still strongly encourage all Victorians to help us plan by completing this survey and map.

If my area hosts new transmission, will there be benefits for us?

Renewable Energy Zones have the potential to deliver multiple benefits including:

- helping Victoria reach its legislated climate change targets
- improving energy reliability and affordability for consumers and businesses
- furthering regional economic development including creating local jobs and infrastructure
- increasing certainty for renewable energy investors.

Additionally, communities that host transmission can expect:

Landholder payments:

VicGrid and the Victorian Government acknowledge the important role landholders play in hosting critical energy and transmission infrastructure. This is why, earlier this year, the Victorian Government announced that new landholder payments for communities that host new energy network

infrastructure are being introduced. The payments to landholders hosting new transmission projects with a typical easement area will be at a standard rate of \$8,000 per year per kilometre for 25 years. This is separate to any compensation under existing arrangements for transmission easements under the Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986, which ensures that property owners are fully and fairly paid for the acquisition of their land or an interest in their land (such as easement), including the impact to any business operations undertaken on the land and the costs to landholders of the acquisition process.

Neighbour payments:

It is also recognised that some neighbouring properties to transmission line developments may still be affected even after mitigation actions associated with project siting and screening are undertaken. VicGrid is further developing guidance to address this issue.

Traditional Owners:

VicGrid will work in partnership with Traditional Owners to understand their benefit sharing expectations. We are committed to partnering with Traditional Owners, embedding self-determination outcomes in our business practices, and ensuring Traditional Owners have a say in how their communities benefit from this infrastructure.

Impacted Communities:

Under the Victorian Transmission Investment Framework, VicGrid will administer Renewable Energy Zone Development Funds for hosting communities of major transmission and renewable energy infrastructure. The purpose of the Funds is to coordinate financial contributions by project proponents towards regional infrastructure and programs in each major transmission development and Renewable Energy Zone area, amplifying community benefits from energy development across transmission, storage and generation projects. Decisions on investments from the Funds will be made by regional community governance bodies in each area.