

Landowner guide



G-REZ

Gippsland Renewable Energy Zone Project

Project highlights



\$500m+ project



Enough clean energy to power **2 million** homes



Reducing **3.6 million** tonnes of CO2 annually



Unlocking **3-4GW** of renewable energy



Improving **reliability** and **diversity** of Victoria's energy supply



Securing the future of Gippsland's **renewable energy** industry

grez.com.au



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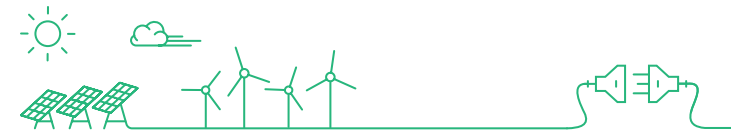
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Introduction

About the project

Victoria is experiencing a renewable energy boom, with a number of renewable energy projects in planning or construction. This will more than double the renewable energy production for the state and fast track the transition away from coal-generated energy.

This unprecedented growth in renewable energy presents incredible opportunities for Victoria. However, it is not without its challenges, most notably, how to transport the energy from where it's generated to where it's needed.

Developing Victoria's first Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) in Gippsland will see the region become one of the state's major hubs for renewable energy. A REZ acts like a new type of power station that coordinates the delivery of renewable energy from multiple large-scale generators to the electricity grid.

The Gippsland Renewable Energy Zone™ project (G-REZ™) is being led by the owner of Victoria's electricity transmission network, AusNet Services (AusNet), in partnership with renewable energy developers.

This pioneering project, which is the first REZ project in Victoria, will involve building new transmission lines and a terminal station to connect multiple renewable energy developments to the Victorian electricity grid.

G-REZ will unlock enough clean energy to power two million homes. It will play a vital role in helping Victoria achieve its renewable energy target of 65 per cent renewable energy by 2030 by enabling renewable energy to connect to the grid more cost effectively, reliably and securely.

Project timeline

We are here



The project infrastructure

Assessing project needs

AusNet has worked with renewable energy developers in the region to assess the transmission infrastructure needed to connect these green sources of energy into the Victorian electricity grid.

To connect between 3 to 4 GW of energy, a new, 500kV high voltage alternating current (HVAC) transmission line and a new terminal station will be required.

AusNet has identified a preferred transmission route and is investigating the construction of appropriate infrastructure for the new G-REZ transmission line.

However, the final design, including the exact location of any transmission infrastructure, will be determined following an extensive process of community engagement, environmental studies and will be subject to funding and approvals.

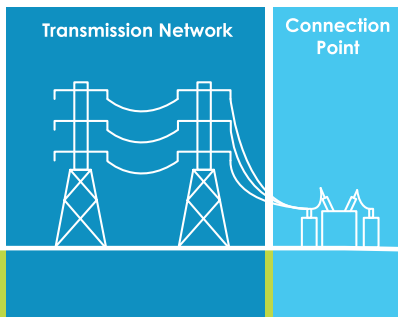
In identifying the preferred transmission route, AusNet used selection criteria that considered:

- geography and topography of the land, including terrain and water bodies
- biodiversity and threatened habitat, including conservation and flora reserves
- overall length required of transmission route and number of landowners impacted
- existing and future land use and infrastructure requirements
- places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance
- proximity to dwellings, schools, hospitals
- incompatible land uses such as transport networks, airfields and airports
- Accessibility for renewable energy developers.

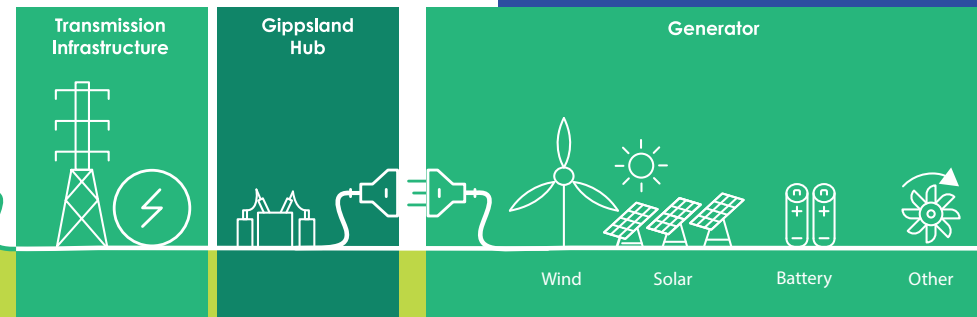
Through applying the selection criteria, a transmission route emerged as the preferred option.

Following extensive discussions with key stakeholders, we later made some changes to the preferred route which can be viewed at

Existing Shared Network



Renewable Energy Zone Infrastructure

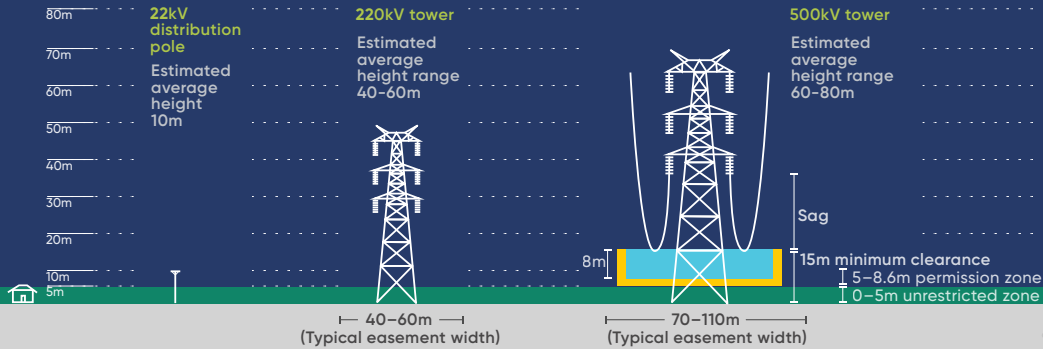


Overhead transmission lines

Any overhead assets would likely include steel towers and poles up to 80m high. These would sit in an easement between 70m and 110m wide.

The typical span between towers is generally between 450 and 550m for 500kV transmission lines. The footprint of each tower would be approximately 20m by 20m.

Overhead option

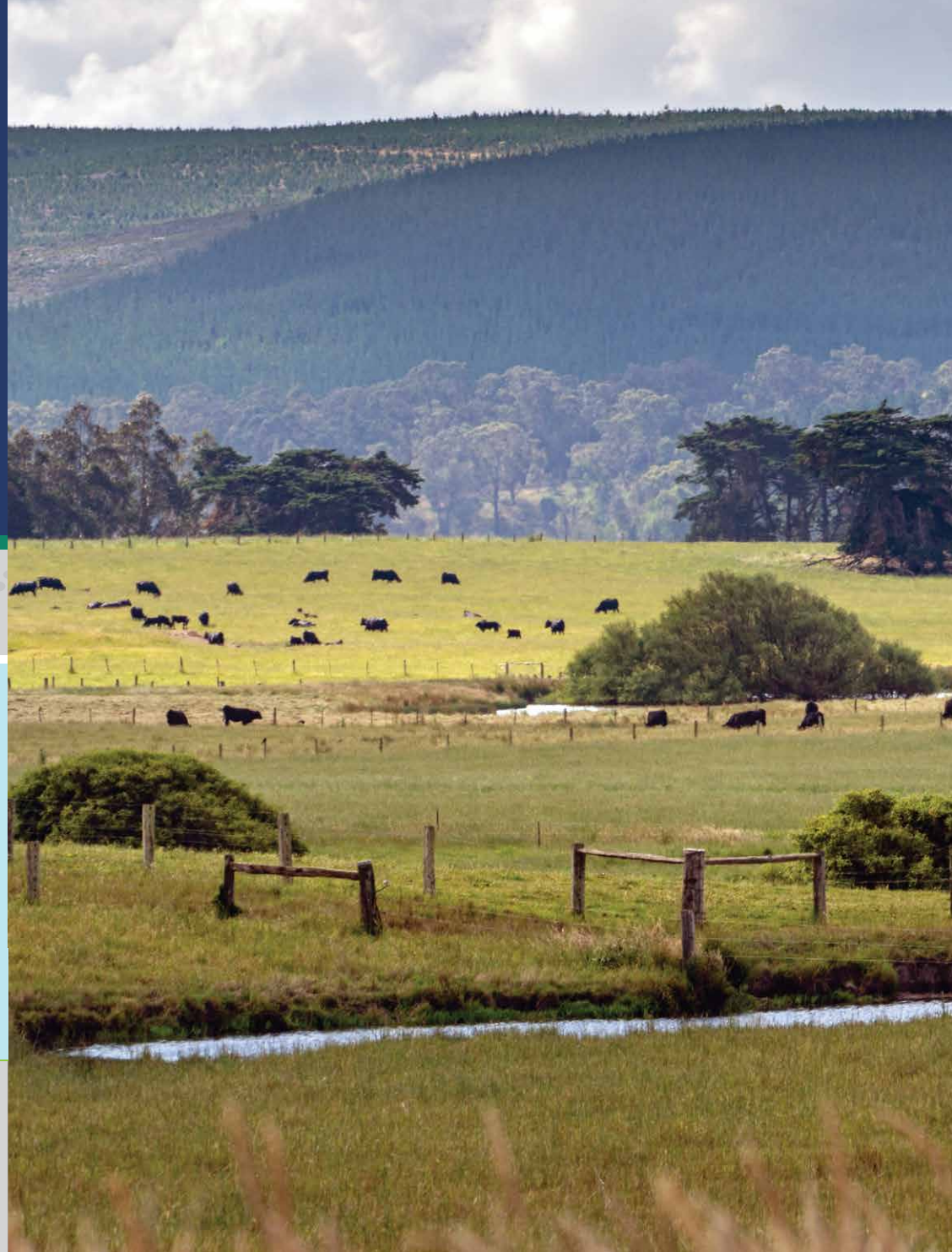
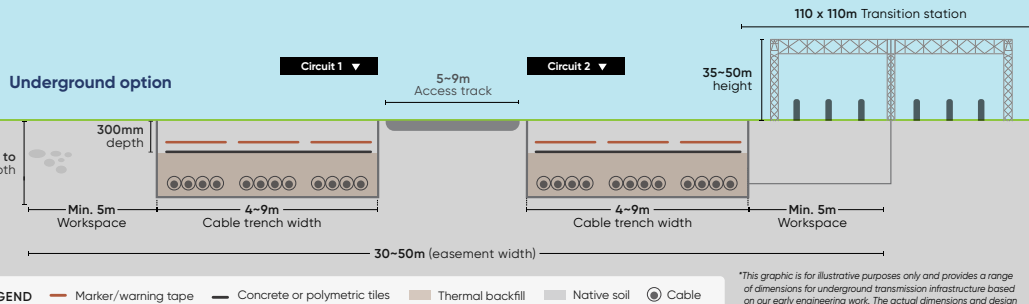


Underground transmission lines

If **underground transmission lines** are developed, they would be buried in trenches up to 2m deep. These would likely sit in an easement approximately 30-50m wide.

Sections of underground line would typically have transition stations at both ends of the cable, which require around 1-1.5ha and include above-ground infrastructure.

Cable joint pits are located underground but with ground level access. For the 18-24 cables needed for G-REZ, there would typically be six to eight joint pits (each 10m wide, 2m deep and 4m long) every 500-750m along the transmission line. Each bay of joint pits would require a footprint of approximately 120m in length and 50m in width.



Land access

Access to land for site investigations

As part of the project planning, AusNet needs to conduct site investigations along the preferred route to fully understand existing conditions, land use and environmental sensitivities.

If we need to undertake investigations on your property, we will contact you to discuss access. We will talk through what investigations we need to undertake and how we can mitigate the interruption to you.

We'll discuss any biosecurity concerns you have as well as notice periods, access points and any other requirements. These agreed conditions will then be documented in a land access consent. Entering a land access consent is voluntary and we welcome the opportunity to discuss and attempt to resolve any concerns you may have.

If you wish to obtain independent legal advice regarding our request for your voluntary consent to access your land, we will reimburse the reasonable legal costs of this independent legal advice with respect to the review and negotiation of the land access consent and access protocol. Should you wish to seek such legal advice, it would be appreciated if you could advise your AusNet contact person who will guide you through the process to arrange your reimbursement.

For landowners who are proposed to host the transmission infrastructure, further investigation such as fauna and flora, geotechnical, Aboriginal cultural heritage and feature surveys may be undertaken.

What will happen on my property?

AusNet and its authorised persons will undertake the surveys and investigations required on your property in line with the land access consent and protocols agreed with you. AusNet will notify you in advance of any proposed visits to your property, explaining the purpose of the visit and detailing biosecurity arrangements.

The surveys and investigation may vary from low impact activities such as walking on land to make observation, to higher impact investigations such as collecting soil and groundwater samples utilising a drilling rig. The surveys and investigations will be done by qualified specialists such as ecologists, cultural heritage and soil specialists, along with support professionals.


AusNet Services' commitments regarding access

AusNet will comply with all applicable laws in accessing your property, including compliance with any required COVIDSafe protocols.

We will abide by all access protocols set out in the land access consent form. This includes ensuring gates are closed or left as they are found.

AusNet will minimise disturbance and do as little damage as possible when undertaking any surveys and investigations. We will repair any damage caused while undertaking these surveys.

AusNet and its authorised persons will have appropriate public liability insurance in place to cover any surveys and investigations conducted on your property.

AusNet and its authorised persons accessing the property will carry identification that can be requested by the landowner or representative of the landowner at any time when on your property. 



Can I view the study findings?

AusNet can provide a summary of survey or investigation findings on your land if requested.

What if something significant is found?

If something significant is found, for example protected flora or fauna, we will provide you with as much information as possible about what was found.

If an Aboriginal Place is discovered, we will, with the support of the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation:

- let you know where the place is
- provide you with sufficient information to ensure the place is not inadvertently impacted by ongoing activities on your property
- record and register the place with First Peoples – State Relations (formerly Aboriginal Victoria)
- work with First Peoples – State Relations and Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation to develop management strategies for the Aboriginal Place with the aim of avoiding or minimising harm during future planned works.

Generally, having Aboriginal cultural places on private land will not stop the existing land use from continuing. Aboriginal sites and places are protected by law; so, if something is found on your property, management strategies will be designed to protect the site or place. In some instances, this may mean relocating and protecting the cultural heritage elsewhere. This would be done at AusNet's cost. More information about Aboriginal cultural heritage is available on the First Peoples – State Relations website www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au.

Biosecurity

Understanding your concerns

AusNet understands that invasive weeds, and plant and animal diseases can threaten the agricultural and livestock industries. We understand that correct management of biosecurity is fundamental to the prosperity of host landowners.

We take seriously our responsibility to landowners and communities in preventing the spread of weeds and diseases. We have developed procedures that apply to entry to land for undertaking surveys and investigation through to construction and maintenance.

AusNet will discuss any access requirements with you and document the unique requirements of your property.

Weed and disease control measures

AusNet and its project partners follow strict biosecurity protocols to manage entry and exit onto land. Our protocols include but are not limited to:

- pre-cleaning all vehicles, clothing, footwear and equipment (all properties)
- disinfecting vehicles and footwear (agricultural, horticultural and livestock properties)
- abiding by visiting and disinfecting requirements (intensive livestock properties or specialist certification properties).

Protecting human health

Protecting human health is of utmost importance to AusNet. When accessing land for surveys and investigations our personnel are committed to:

- adhering to government requirements during pandemics
- determining where to go and who to speak to on arrival.

In addition to these requirements we commit to:

- seeking prior information that could affect our visit
- ensuring PPE is always available and worn as listed in the manufacturer's Safety Data Sheets (SDS)
- storing, handling, and using all chemicals in accordance with precautions listed in the manufacturer's SDS, with a current version of the SDS available in the work vehicle or at the work site.

Easements

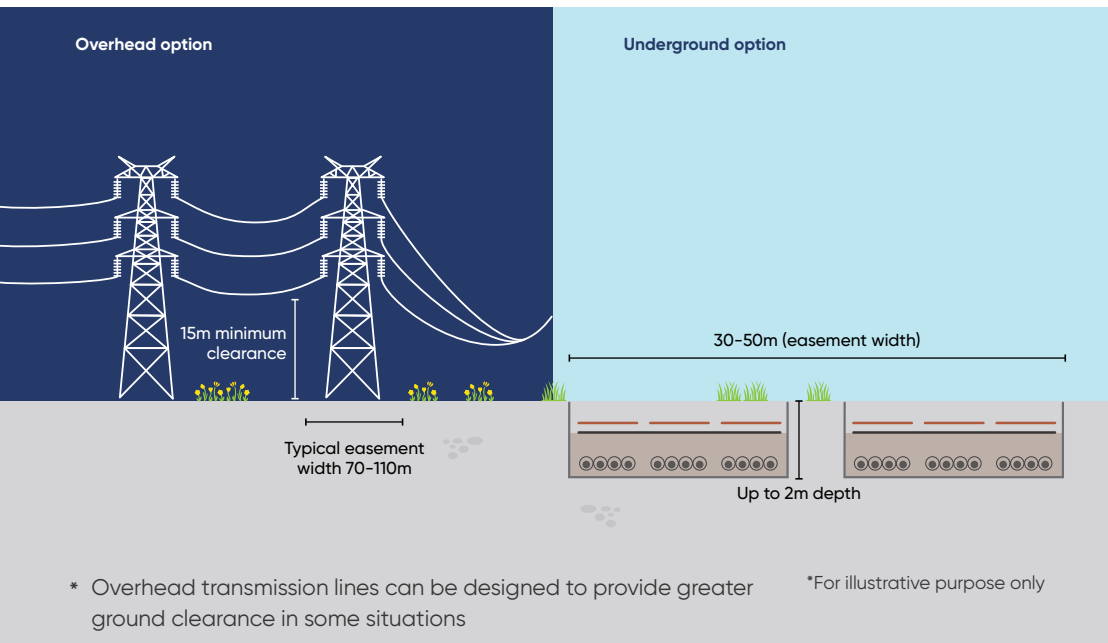
Easements and why they're needed

For transmission lines, an easement refers to the land that the transmission towers or lines are located on or under. Easements vary depending on the design of the infrastructure, the operating voltage and the site-specific conditions.

An easement does not change who owns the land. It provides AusNet with rights to access, install infrastructure on and use part of the land owned by another party.

AusNet and the landowner agree on easement terms which set out the rights and responsibilities of each party and document any restrictions on what can be done within the easement. These restrictions help us protect the safety of the landowner, the community and the transmission system.

An easement does not transfer ownership of the land contained within the easement but grants rights for its use by agreement with, and compensation of, the landowner.



* Overhead transmission lines can be designed to provide greater ground clearance in some situations

*For illustrative purpose only

Easement registration

An easement will usually be registered on the title to the property. The purpose of registering an easement over land is to show on the public record that an easement exists. Easements for the project will be surveyed to determine the boundaries of the easement area and then forms will be lodged with Land Victoria to register the easements on the title. Unlike a lease agreement, easements registered against a title have no expiry date and will bind the new landowner if the land is sold.

When will easements be negotiated?

Once a final route for the transmission line is determined, AusNet will seek to negotiate an option for easement with each landowner along that route. An option for easement will give AusNet a right to acquire an easement at a later date, usually once the design is finalised and project approvals have been granted.

We will meet with each landowner to discuss the location of the easement, the type of assets that will be installed and the conditions of the easement. We will also discuss the compensation that will be paid for acquiring an easement.

Option for easement

An option is a legally binding agreement between parties that grants one party (the grantee) the right (but does not oblige them) to acquire an interest from another party (the grantor) on agreed terms, within a certain period. For this project, AusNet expects to seek an option for easement that will grant us a right to acquire an easement over the landowner's land on agreed terms and for an agreed price within a certain period.

Exercising the option

If AusNet wants to proceed with the easement on the land, we will 'exercise' the option for easement. This means we will notify the landowner if we want to proceed with the easement and undertake the steps outlined in the option for easement.

Timelines

To allow for flexibility, AusNet will usually have three years from the date the option for easement starts to exercise the option for easement, with a right to extend this period by a further year. If we do not exercise the option or extend it within the required timeframe, the option for easement will expire.

Compensation

Easement terms

The easement terms will be outlined in the option for easement. The option for easement and associated easement terms will allow AusNet to investigate, construct, operate and maintain the transmission lines and associated infrastructure required for the project.

Option fee

Landowners are entitled to a one-off 'option fee' in exchange for entering into an option and an 'extension fee' if the option is extended. Reasonable legal and professional costs incurred by the landowner in negotiating the option for easement will be reimbursed by AusNet.

Who receives compensation?

Compensation will be paid to landowners where an easement is acquired. All other parties holding an interest in the land on which the easement is located, who suffer loss due to the establishment of the easement or construction activity, will also be considered as part of the compensation process.

How is the compensation amount determined?

We use independent, qualified valuers to value each land parcel to ensure offers of compensation are fair and fully consider the impact of the easement on the land. You will have opportunities to discuss the impact of the easement on your property with the valuer and provide information to assist in determining the compensation payable. By working with the appointed valuer, you can provide a clear understanding of your individual property characteristics and land use. There may be things about your property that the valuer needs to be made aware of, for example, special value (see page 13).

If you want to obtain your own independent valuation, the valuations by both valuers will be considered to assist the negotiation process.

The assessment of compensation will be determined in accordance with valuation principles set out in the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986* (Vic) and the *Valuation of Land Act 1960* (Vic) made up of the following components:

Market value

The compensation for market value is the difference between the market value of the land before the easement and after the easement. Market value may include the reasonable 'highest and best use' of the land, based on what is physically, legally and financially possible. For example, the 'highest and best use' of the land might be subdivision of the land into individual lots or its value might be greatest if multiple parcels are packaged.

Severance

Severance refers to the compensation payable for any reduction in the market value of land which is caused by land being severed from other land because of the easement. For example, an easement on agricultural land may be located so that it effectively 'quarantines' a part of the land, limiting its use for farming activities. This will usually be included in the market value calculation.

Special value

Special value refers to any additional financial value only available to the specific landowner in respect of the affected land and not to the market in general. This considers 'special' economic value rather than sentimental value. For example, a house fitted out with consulting rooms may have special value to the doctor-owner but would not have value to the market in general. This will usually be included in the market value calculation.

Disturbance

Disturbance refers to any financial loss caused by disruption to the landowner, including the landowner's business, arising directly and reasonably from creating the easement. For example, if timing of the acquisition means that the landowner cannot harvest a sown crop, the landowner will be compensated for the value of crop lost.

Legal/valuation

Legal/valuation refers to any reasonable professional costs incurred by the landowner because of the acquisition of the easement.

When will compensation be paid?

We generally pay 80 per cent of the easement compensation at the time the option is exercised, with the balance paid at the time the easement is registered on the land title, which will be detailed in the option for easement.

We can also discuss flexible payment options for the agreed easement compensation.

This may include spreading the agreed easement compensation over a longer period, including annualised payments.

Will my costs be covered?

If you obtain independent legal advice to assist in the process to negotiate an option for easement, and/or independent valuation advice from a qualified valuer to assist in the valuation, compensation and easement negotiation process, we will reimburse the reasonable cost of this independent advice.

Living with an easement on your property

What activities are permitted on the easement?

While there are some restrictions on the use of the land within an easement for transmission lines and towers, there are many permitted activities which could be included in the easement terms.

We will work with landowners to agree on the easement terms.

Some activities require a safety assessment. Safety assessments are provided to landowners free of charge. A written notice of permission to proceed will be issued following the assessment, which will detail any required safety precautions.

We will work with landowners to identify opportunities to minimise impacts on existing land use throughout the project, and to conduct safety assessments where required.

Activities within easements for 500kV lines

AusNet is investigating the construction of appropriate infrastructure for the new G-REZ transmission line. While we have identified a preferred route, the final design, including the exact location of any transmission infrastructure, will be determined following an extensive process of community engagement, environmental studies and will be subject to funding and approvals.

While the line design has not been finalised and the detailed restrictions are not yet known, there are standard restrictions that would apply to the easement. The No Go Zone rules, published by Energy Safe Victoria, also describes minimum safety requirements for working near transmission lines.

	OVERHEAD TRANSMISSION Easement		UNDERGROUND TRANSMISSION Easement	
Agricultural and farming activities	Permitted	Conditions /Notes	Permitted	Conditions /Notes
Crops and vegetation	Yes	<p>Mature tree and shrub growth of up to 3m in height is permitted. For vegetation above 3m in height, an AusNet safety assessment is required. Maximum height cannot exceed 8m.</p> <p>Planting trees and shrubs should be scattered or clumped with no more than 10% density of cover over the easement area.</p> <p>Ground-growing crop types are allowed without requiring an AusNet safety assessment if earth movement change is less than 300mm in depth from the original ground profile.</p> <p>Ground-growing crops are permitted to grow within 5m of the tower steelwork, subject to obtaining AusNet permission, and provided access for maintenance works is maintained.</p>	No	<p>The transmission cable trench will have a thermal back fill which cannot be disturbed by vegetation roots and farming activities.</p> <p>For comparable underground transmission cables, thermal back fill would be approximately 300mm below the surface.</p>
Grazing of livestock	Yes	No conditions	Yes	<p>Subject to the ESV No Go Zone for operating related equipment. Equipment can traverse across the easement.</p>
Use of centre pivot and lateral moving irrigators	Yes	<p>Are permitted to operate up to 8.6m in height, subject to an AusNet safety assessment, which must be sought prior to operating. Maximum height of machinery cannot exceed 8.6m.</p>	Yes	<p>Subject to the ESV No Go Zone for operating. Equipment can traverse across the easement.</p>
Use of rain gun irrigators	No	<p>Large water spray irrigators of the gun type are not permitted to operate within the easement due to safety risks and potential damage to transmission infrastructure.</p>	Yes	<p>Subject to the ESV No Go Zone for operating. Equipment can traverse across the easement.</p>

	OVERHEAD TRANSMISSION Easement		UNDERGROUND TRANSMISSION Easement	
Agricultural and farming activities	Permitted	Conditions /Notes	Permitted	Conditions /Notes
Use of headers with augers extended	Yes	<p>Are permitted to operate up to 5m in height without an AusNet safety assessment.</p> <p>Are permitted to operate over 5m in height, subject to an AusNet safety assessment, which must be sought prior to operating.</p> <p>Maximum height cannot exceed 8.6m.</p>	Yes	<p>Subject to the ESV No Go Zone for operating.</p> <p>Equipment can traverse across the easement.</p>
Vehicles	Yes	<p>Are permitted to travel under the lines and operate vehicles up to 5m in height without an AusNet safety assessment.</p> <p>Are permitted to operate between 5m and 8.6m in height, subject to an AusNet safety assessment, which must be sought prior to operating.</p> <p>Maximum height cannot exceed 8.6m.</p>	Yes	<p>Subject to the ESV No Go Zone for operating.</p> <p>Equipment can traverse across the easement.</p>
Aerial crop spraying – manned aircraft (e.g. light planes and helicopters) and unmanned aerial vehicles (e.g. drones)	No	Manned aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles are prohibited within the transmission line easement due to the safety risk and potential damage to electricity infrastructure.	Yes	No conditions.
Fencing	Yes	All fixed metallic parts must be earthed and are subject to prior approval from AusNet.	Yes	<p>No driving fence posts into the ground within an underground cable easement.</p> <p>Prior to construction (including digging and earth moving activities) AusNet must be contacted via Dial Before You Dig.</p> <p>No excavation work can commence until AusNet has responded to your Dial Before You Dig enquiry.</p> <p>Visit www.1100.com.au to lodge an online enquiry.</p>

	OVERHEAD TRANSMISSION Easement		UNDERGROUND TRANSMISSION Easement	
Agricultural and farming activities	Permitted	Conditions /Notes	Permitted	Conditions /Notes
Construction (including digging and earth moving activities)	Yes	<p>No excavation work can commence until AusNet has responded to your Dial Before You Dig enquiry and issued a permit to work adjacent to a high voltage electrical apparatus.</p> <p>Visit www.1100.com.au to lodge an online enquiry.</p> <p>Note: A permit is not required for planting crops if earth movement change is less than 300mm in depth from the original ground profile.</p>	Yes	<p>This is assumed to only be required for running other utilities and services where there may be a need for coordination in relation to the transmission easement.</p> <p>No excavation work is to commence until AusNet has responded to your Dial Before You Dig enquiry.</p> <p>Visit www.1100.com.au to lodge an online enquiry.</p>
Lifting wet heads from sunken bores	Yes	AusNet prior approval required.	N/A	All underground infrastructure within the easement will be removed or relocated.
Dams	Yes	<p>Entire coverage of easement by dams is not permitted.</p> <p>Dams cannot be located within a 30m radius of any tower centre.</p> <p>Seek advice from AusNet for appropriate location.</p> <p>Where a dam is proposed to be located outside the 30m radius of any tower, the high-water level and the top of earthworks/embankments must continue to maintain the minimum ground clearance of 15m.</p>	No	
GPS	Yes	<p>The flow of electrical energy through the transmission lines does not affect GPS signals.</p> <p>There can be a small effect on GPS signals if you are under or right alongside a tower. This is known as multipathing. It is associated with being too close to a steel structure which could be a tower, windmill, shed or any other metal structure. The effect is only noticeable within about 3m of the metal object.</p>	Yes	The flow of electrical energy through the transmission lines does not affect GPS signals.



Inspection and maintenance of easements

Once operational, AusNet conducts routine inspections of the line and easement to ensure the transmission infrastructure is safe and operating correctly.

For overhead lines, we would typically inspect these once a year via the air and once a year via land vehicles. We would also undertake any required annual pre-summer vegetation maintenance. For underground lines, we would inspect these once a year in person.

As a landowner, you would continue to have possession and use of the easement, subject to the terms and conditions of the easement agreement. You would be responsible for general maintenance of the land within

the easement in the same way you are responsible for maintenance of any property owned. You would not be responsible for maintaining any electrical or other infrastructure belonging to AusNet.

Ongoing access

For planned maintenance, AusNet will ensure we give notification to the landowner prior to our teams accessing their property. In the event of an emergency, AusNet requires access to the easement 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

We respect landowners' privacy and understand the importance of biosecurity to their property and its operations. Where we require access to your land for routine activities, we will endeavour to provide seven days' notice.



Guidelines and resources

Dial before you dig

www.1100.com.au

Energy Safe Victoria

No Go Zones and working around powerlines:

<https://esv.vic.gov.au/technical-information/electricalinstallations-and-infrastructure/no-go-zones/>

WorkSafe Victoria

Managing the risk of overhead powerlines:

<https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/safety-alerts/managing-risks-overhead-powerlines>

Damaging underground electrical cables:

<https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/damaging-underground-electrical-cables-health-and-safety-solution>

Victorian Farmers Federation - land access

<https://www.vff.org.au/policy/environment/land-access/>

Additional information

Our commitment to landowners

To ensure this project delivers the best outcomes, AusNet will work with landowners, other stakeholders, and the community during all stages of the development.

We are committed to engaging with you openly, honestly, frequently and ahead of time, so that you can participate in the development of this project. We will provide multiple opportunities and channels for you to provide feedback on a range of issues, including:

- location of the preferred transmission infrastructure
- mitigation of land access and construction impacts
- engagement and communication methods
- local business opportunities
- community benefit opportunities.

Your feedback will be considered in the final project design.

Your AusNet contact

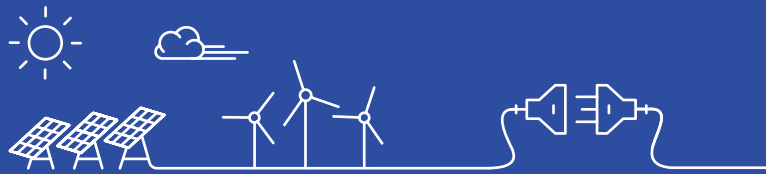
As a landowner along the preferred route, you have a dedicated AusNet contact person as your key point of contact for the project. That person will work with you to address any questions and concerns.

Your AusNet contact person will also discuss access protocols and procedures through a voluntary land access consent process to ensure any potential impact to your property, lifestyle, operations, biosecurity or livestock is kept to a minimum.

Your AusNet contact person will work with you to understand your land use and activities and how the infrastructure will impact your property. They will discuss the easement requirements and infrastructure, and provide information about compensation.

Privacy policy


Please visit: ausnetservices.com.au/privacy to view the Privacy Policy.



Contact Us

For more information, or to speak to a member of our team, please visit:

 [grez.com.au](https://www.grez.com.au)

 1300 360 795

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AusNet

