North West Transmission Developments

Assessments, approvals, and studies

January 2024

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North West Transmission Developments

The North West Transmission Developments will be subject to a robust planning and environmental assessment and approvals process before construction can commence.

The project, which was formally declared a major infrastructure project under the *Major Infrastructure Development Approvals Act 1999* (MIDAA), will need approvals under the following Acts:

- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwth) (EPBC Act)
- *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* (LUPAA).

Separate approvals may also be required under the:

- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1975* (Tas)
- *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995* (Tas).

The approvals process

Like any major project developer, TasNetworks is required to prepare a Development Application (DA) and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project to be properly assessed.

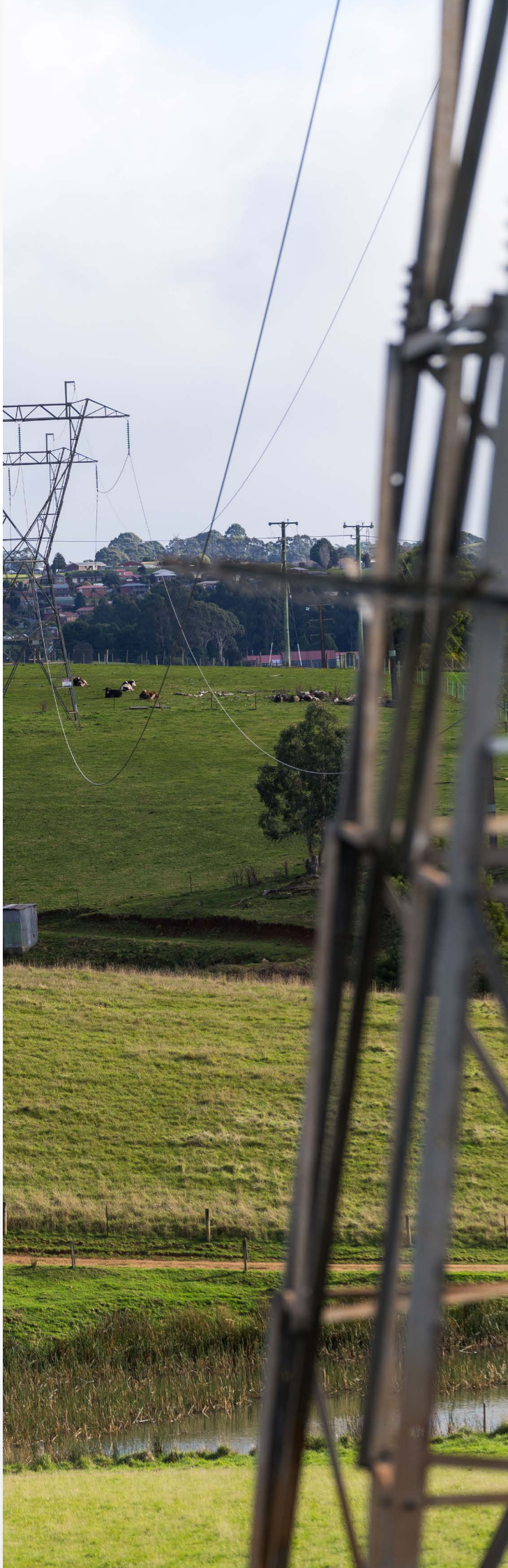
These documents will form a consolidated 'application' that will enable the Tasmanian Planning Commission (TPC), the responsible planning authority under MIDAA, to assess the project against the project assessment criteria and determine whether a permit will be granted. If approved, the project may be required to adhere to certain permit conditions in order to proceed to the construction phase.

As part of the assessment process, the DA and EIS will be publicly exhibited and anyone may make a submission. The TPC is required to consider all submissions when undertaking its assessment and determining whether to grant a permit.

The decision of the TPC in relation to the DA may be appealed to the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

As the project has been identified as being a 'controlled action' in relation to Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) under the EPBC Act, the approval of the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment will also be required.

Technical studies and field investigations to inform the DA and EIS have been completed for the proposed North West Transmission Developments. The outcomes of these investigations have been used to help understand the existing conditions along the preferred route and have informed the basis of the application for approval of the project.



What is a Development Application and an Environmental Impact Statement?

The North West Transmission Developments has been accredited for a combined assessment under LUPAA and the EPBC Act. This assessment requires TasNetworks to submit a DA and an EIS to the TPC for consideration.

A DA is a document that demonstrates how the project will satisfy the planning related provisions of the project assessment criteria. The criteria includes a number of land use and development standards similar to what would be contained in a planning scheme and includes provisions in relation to matters such as noise, impacts on agricultural land, visual amenity and traffic impacts.

An EIS is prepared as part of an environmental assessment process that, for this project, will be undertaken in conjunction with the planning assessment.

The EIS includes:

- A description of the existing environment in the project area informed by independent technical studies.
- An assessment of the potential negative and positive impacts the project may have on the environment, including in relation to threatened flora and fauna.
- Proposed measures for avoiding, minimising or mitigating the potential impacts of the project on the environment.

The EIS will be assessed by the TPC who will then provide a report to the Commonwealth Minster for Environment to inform the Minister's decision whether to approve the project under the EPBC Act or not.

The project assessment criteria for the DA and EIS are available on the TPC website:

www.planning.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/618393/Planning-Criteria-1-February-2021.PDF

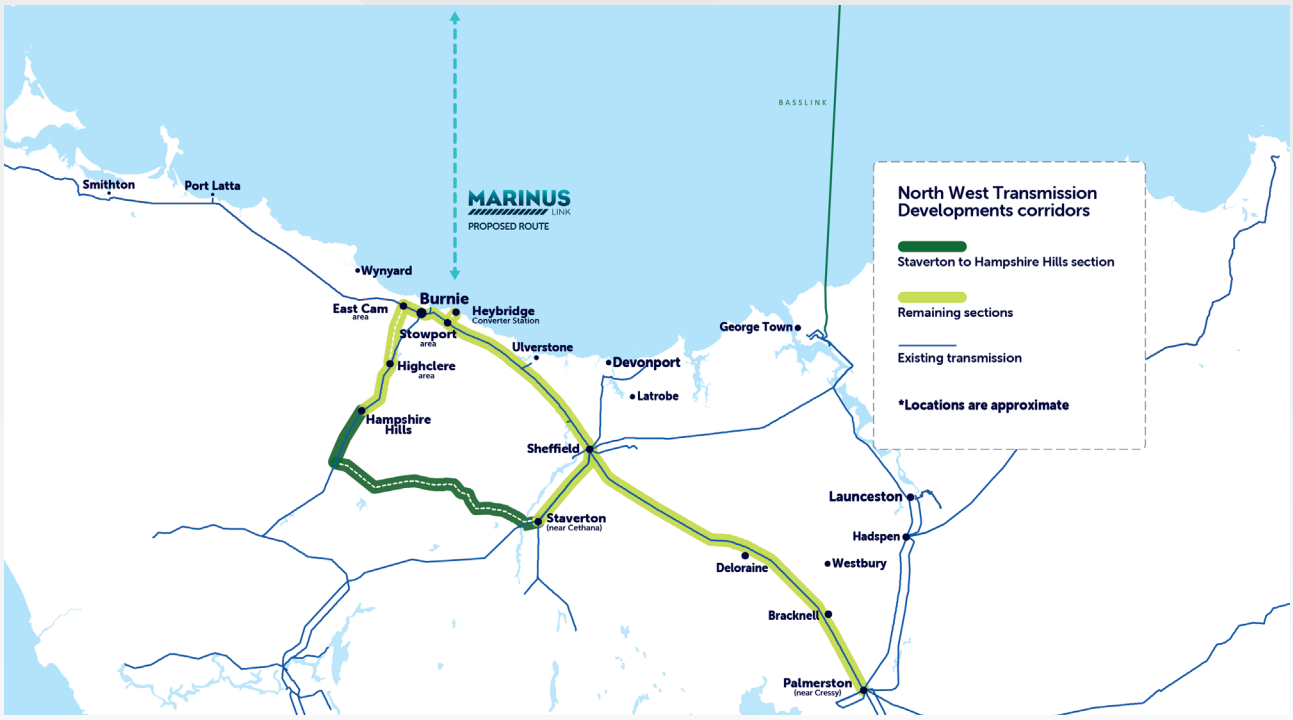


Figure 1: Proposed Staverton to Hampshire Hills and Remaining sections of the NWTD project

Environmental and socio-economic studies

A team of technical and environmental specialists were engaged to undertake technical studies to understand the existing conditions along the sections of the route.

The information collected through the technical studies was used to assess the potential impacts of the project and develop the DA and EIS.

These studies commenced in 2020 and included:

- Field investigations to survey existing conditions across twelve key study topics for the Staverton to Hampshire Hills section and fifteen key study topics for the Remaining sections of the route.
- Using mapping, modelling and other methods to assess potential impacts on the environment
- Consultation with stakeholders, community members and landholders.

Study area

The study area for our technical studies and investigations was based on the North West Transmission Developments preferred route and the associated proposed switching station and substation sites at Sheffield, Staverton, Hampshire Hills and in the Burnie area.

The study area parameters varied for each technical study depending on the aspect being investigated. The exact study area for each technical study is described in each of the technical study reports which are appendices to the combined DA and EIS application.

For all technical studies, the survey area at a minimum included the transmission line and easement area, as well as a buffer zone on either side of the easement area.

Technical studies

As part of the assessment application, twelve studies were conducted for both the Staverton to Hampshire Hills section and Remaining sections of the proposed project (see figure 1). An additional three studies were undertaken for the Remaining sections, including Agriculture and Forestry Impact, Aquatic Ecology and Coastal Hazard Assessments.

The studies considered potential impacts from construction and operation of the transmission lines.

The following table provides an overview of the technical studies and what they include. We will be sharing the findings of the studies at public information sessions in 2024.

Study	What was studied
Aboriginal and historic heritage	Potential impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage sites.
Air quality	Potential impacts on air quality, particularly dust from construction activities.
Climate change and greenhouse gas emissions	Potential impacts of climate change, particularly severe weather events, on the design and operation of the transmission lines. It also assessed greenhouse gas emissions that may be generated during construction and operation of the project.
Contaminated land	If contaminated land or acid sulfate soils are located in the area and how this would be managed.
Ecology	Potential impacts on native vegetation, plants, threatened species, animals and habitats during construction and operation.
Aquatic Ecology [Remaining sections only]	Potential impacts on aquatic ecology during construction and operation.
Coastal hazard [Remaining sections only]	Assessment and management of coastal hazard risk to project infrastructure.
Agriculture and Forestry [Remaining sections only]	Impact Assessment on Agricultural and Forestry land.
Geology, geomorphology and landslip hazard assessment	Potential impacts on ground stability and soils from the construction of the transmission towers and switching station and how this would be managed.
Groundwater	Potential changes to groundwater levels, flows and quality during construction and operation.
Hydrology	Potential impacts to surface water flows and flood levels during construction and operation.
Landscape and visual	The extent the landscape will change from the construction and operation of the new transmission lines.
Noise and vibration	Potential noise and vibration impacts during construction and operation.
Social impact assessment	Potential impacts, both positive and negative, on residents, businesses and tourists during construction and operation of the project.
Traffic and transport	The temporary changes to traffic conditions during construction and the potential impact this would have on traffic flow and safety.

How has the community been engaged?

Feedback has helped us to refine the design of the transmission developments and understand interests and concerns.

The DA and EIS application has been developed in consultation with stakeholders, community members and landholders through individual meetings, community engagement sessions and workshops, webinars, focus groups and surveys.

You can learn more about the key technical studies:

- Online – by visiting **tasnetworks.com.au/nwtd**
- In person – by attending one of our community pop-up events.

Formal submissions

You will be provided with a formal opportunity to make a written submission on the North West Transmission Developments application when it is placed on public exhibition in 2024.

To be notified when the application is on public exhibition or for other upcoming engagement opportunities, you can register at:

tasnetworks.com.au/nwtd

Contact us

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