TRANSMISSION COMPANY VICTORIA

Farming with VNI West

Farming near transmission infrastructure

There are many farming activities which can take place in a transmission line easement.

Across Victoria, farming and agriculture have co-existed for many years, with over 6,500 kilometres of transmission lines already in place.

TCV will work closely with farmers in the draft corridor for the VNI West project to find the best location for a new 500Kv transmission line - with the least impact on the day to day farm operations and productivity.

Machinery up to 5m high will be able to operate under the new VNI West transmission lines, and taller machinery up to 8.6m may also be used subject to a safety assessment.

Some activities are subject to height restrictions, or prohibited for safety reasons (such as gun irrigation and aerial spraying).

Farming activities under transmission infrastructure

The following table outlines various farming activities and their restrictions in relation to the expected allowances for the VNI West transmission lines. They are to be used as a guide only. Once tower designs for the VNI West project have been finalised, further information will be made available to landholders in relation to the separation distances relevant to a specific property. For landholders currently hosting transmission easements, please consult your Transmission Network Service Provider (TNSP) for specific guidance.

Farming activity	Allowed?	Restrictions
Grain shifting augers	✓	Based on a minimum 15m ground clearance and the No Go Zone guidelines published by Energy Safe Victoria (ESV)1, vehicles and equipment of up to 5m in height may travel and operate without permission.
Boom sprayers	✓	
Seeders	✓	
Harvesters	✓	
Autonomous vehicles	✓	
Centre pivot and lateral moving irrigators	✓	
Rain gun irrigators	✗	Large water spray irrigators (i.e. gun irrigation) not permitted to operate within the easement due to safety risks and potential damage to electricity infrastructure.
Construction vehicles and equipment	✓	Construction vehicles and equipment may operate under transmission infrastructure subject to height restrictions (as noted above). Note: No excavation work is to commence until a permit has been issued to work adjacent to a high voltage electrical apparatus. Stockpiling of excavated material is prohibited.
Aircraft spraying	✗	Manned aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles are prohibited within the transmission line easement due to the safety risk and potential damage to electricity infrastructure.
GPS	✓	The flow of electrical energy through the transmission lines does not affect GPS signals. 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.

Farming activities under transmission infrastructure

Farming activity	Allowed?	Restrictions
Broadacre cropping	✓	Ground-growing crop types allowed without requiring a safety assessment if earth movement change is less than 300mm in depth from the original ground profile. Ground-growing crops permitted to grow within 5m of the tower steelwork, subject to obtaining permission from the TNSP, and provided access for maintenance works is maintained.
Orchards	✓	Orchards permitted within easement subject to relevant height restrictions.
Trees and shrubs	✓	Trees and shrubs up to 3m in height permitted without a safety assessment. Vegetation above 3m in height require safety assessment to ensure that minimum clearances and fuel load densities are maintained. Maximum height cannot exceed 8m.
Livestock	✓	Livestock permitted with no restrictions.
Farm sheds	✓	Domestic garages (non-habitable), carports, silos and garden sheds may be granted a permit from a limited distance onto the easement subject to a number of requirements being met. These include sufficient safety clearance to towers and overhead conductors; height restrictions; construction made largely of non-flammable materials and not attached to a dwelling.
Paddock fencing	✓	Non-metallic fences up to three metres in height are permitted. Metallic fences, or fences incorporating metallic materials must be suitably earthed and sectionalised and are subject to approval. All fixed metallic parts must be earthed and are subject to prior approval.
Drone operation	✓	Drones may be allowed within the easement, subject to a safety assessment and permission from the TNSP.

Frequently asked questions

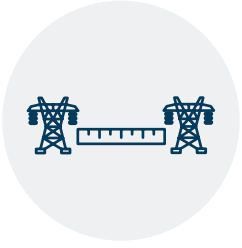
My machinery is over 5m high - how do I get a permit?
You will be able to request a permit by contacting the network operator (TNSP). A TNSP has not yet been selected for VNI West, but as a guide, according to AusNet (the TNSP that owns and maintains existing Victorian transmission line infrastructure), it will take 10 business days to complete a safety assessment or permit application once a simple form is submitted via email. There is no permit cost.

How large will the easement be?
The easement for VNI West will be between 70 metres and 120 metres wide to allow access for maintenance and for safety control measures.

How large will the base of the towers be?
The footings for the towers will be approximately 15 – 20m2. There will be a buffer around the base of the tower of approximately 5m (not fenced).

How will TCV mitigate biosecurity risks on my property?
Before accessing land, the TCV Landholder Liaison will work with landholders to identify all biosecurity requirements for their property, and agree on appropriate management plans. These will be detailed and documented in the Land Access Agreement.

How long will the spans between towers be?
The distance between each tower will be roughly 400 meters, however this may vary with the terrain.



Frequently asked questions

Will I be compensated if the transmission lines require new machinery or other related costs?

Yes, where there are impacts on property values or new transmission lines require farming business practices to be modified, such as remapping of GPS, compensation will be paid and the cost of undertaking this work will be covered by the project. We will work with landholders to minimise the impacts on existing farming and agricultural activities.

How long is the lifespan of these towers and what happens to them when they are decommissioned?

Decommissioning occurs when a transmission line has reached the end of its useful life and is de-energised, and typically removed. Most overhead transmission lines have a long lifespan, so decommissioning of existing transmission lines is not common but may occur if the transmission line is being replaced with a higher voltage line. Remediation and associated costs would be the responsibility of the TNSP (Transmission Network Service Provider - the owners of the transmission infrastructure).

TRANSMISSION COMPANY VICTORIA

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If you need an interpreter, please call 13 12 50 and reference Transmission Company Victoria. If you are deaf and/or find hearing or speaking with people on the phone difficult, please contact the National Relay Service on voice relay number 1300 555 727, TTY number 133 677 or SMS relay number 0423 677 767.