

Bushfire management

Hunter Transmission Project

Fact Sheet | July 2026

The Hunter Transmission Project will deliver a new 110-kilometre 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission line between Bayswater (near Muswellbrook) and Olney (near Eraring), strengthening the NSW electricity network and supporting the transition to renewable energy.

Project status

Following detailed assessment by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces has granted planning approval for the Hunter Transmission Project and issued the Conditions of Approval.

The assessment considered environmental and technical studies, community and stakeholder feedback, and advice from councils and government agencies.

The project will now progress through detailed design and planning before construction can begin.

Subject to approvals and delivery planning:

- A network operator is expected to be appointed in 2026
- Detailed design and construction planning will continue
- Construction is expected to commence from 2027.

Bushfire management

Planning approval has been granted for the Hunter Transmission Project, including approval for bushfire management during construction and operation. The assessment considered:



Transmission line design in bushfire-prone areas



Vegetation management within the easement



Emergency response coordination and cumulative bushfire risk

The assessment covered the full corridor, including Pokolbin, Corrabare, Watagan and Olney State forests. Conditions of Approval require bushfire management measures to be in place before construction begins.

What planning approval considered

Planning approval for the Hunter Transmission Project (HTP) included detailed assessment of bushfire risk and management measures through the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Submissions Report and Amendment Report. The assessment confirmed:

- the amended project does not result in a material change to the bushfire risks identified during construction or operation
- cumulative bushfire risk across the broader Hunter and Watagans landscape would not materially change.

Conditions of Approval require bushfire and emergency management measures to be implemented during construction and operation.

Transmission lines and bushfire safety

The HTP will connect to the existing 500 kV transmission network, which already operates in bushfire-prone parts of NSW.

The project has been designed and assessed with bushfire safety considerations in mind, including:

- there are no recorded bushfires in NSW attributed to 500 kV transmission lines
- transmission towers are steel and non-combustible
- minimum vegetation clearances will be maintained
- tower design and spacing allow continued aerial and ground-based firefighting access
- infrastructure will be regularly inspected and maintained.

The transmission line is designed to operate safely in bushfire-prone environments, including during periods of high temperatures and severe fire weather.

Conditions of Approval require bushfire management, vegetation management and emergency response measures to be implemented during construction and operation.

Operational decisions during extreme fire weather, including whether infrastructure remains energised, will be made by the network operator in accordance with established electricity network safety protocols.

Bushfire and power outages

During severe fire weather, electricity networks across NSW may implement precautionary operational measures to maintain safety and reliability.

Any operational decisions would be made by the network operator in line with established electricity network safety protocols.



Forested landscape near Freemans Drive in the Hunter region



Steel transmission towers

Vegetation management and State forests

The corridor passes through parts of Pokolbin, Corrabare, Watagan and Olney State forests. Vegetation management within the easement will support safe operation of the transmission line and bushfire protection requirements, including:



Maintaining safe separation between conductors and vegetation



Removing hazard trees where required



Undertaking works in accordance with bushfire protection standards.

Permanent asset protection zones and other built infrastructure to support bushfire safety will also be maintained around substations. Clearing will be limited to what is required for operational safety and designed to minimise increased fuel loads in surrounding forest areas.

Vegetation management and access arrangements within State forests will be undertaken in consultation with relevant land managers and fire authorities. Conditions of Approval require vegetation management, environmental safeguards and bushfire protection measures during construction and operation.

Construction phase controls

Construction will be delivered by the network operator in partnership with the Design and Construct (D&C) contractor, in accordance with the Conditions of Approval. Bushfire risk during construction primarily relates to vegetation and equipment used during construction activities. Bushfire controls will include:

- compliance with total fire bans
- on-site firefighting capability
- weather monitoring
- coordination with the NSW Rural Fire Service.

Some access track refinements may also support emergency access where appropriate.



Key milestones

Planning



Assessment



Delivery



*Timeframes are indicative and subject to planning approvals and project delivery requirements.



Transmission corridor with managed vegetation

What happens next

Planning approval has been granted for the Hunter Transmission Project, with Conditions of Approval now in place.

The project will now progress through detailed design, pre-construction planning and delivery preparation. Before construction can commence, a range of management plans and additional approvals required under the Conditions of Approval must be prepared and approved.

In 2024, Transgrid was identified as the preferred network operator for the Hunter Transmission Project. Subject to final approvals and contractual arrangements, a network operator is expected to be formally appointed in 2026.

EnergyCo, Transgrid and future delivery partners will continue working with communities, councils, landholders and stakeholders as the project progresses.

Ongoing management

The network operator will manage bushfire risk through vegetation maintenance, regular inspections and infrastructure upkeep, in coordination with emergency services and land managers.

Conditions of Approval require ongoing vegetation management, environmental monitoring and bushfire protection measures during construction and operation.

The assessment confirmed the amended project would not change the overall level of bushfire risk across the broader Hunter and Watagans landscape.

How to stay informed

All project documentation, including links to the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Submissions Report, Amendment Report and Conditions of Approval, is available on the Hunter Transmission Project website.

You can also sign up to receive project updates and e-newsletters. Visit energyco.nsw.gov.au/http



Scan the QR code to access the Hunter Transmission Project webpage.



Contact us

EnergyCo is the NSW Government statutory authority responsible for delivering the Hunter Transmission Project as a critical part of transitioning to a cleaner future under the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap.



htp@energyco.nsw.gov.au



1800 645 972 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)



energyco.nsw.gov.au/http



Scan the QR code for more information.

If you need help understanding this information, please contact the Translating and Interpreting Service on **131 450** and ask them to call us on **1800 645 972**.