

# Bushfire risk assessment

## Hunter Transmission Project environmental impact statement

March 2025

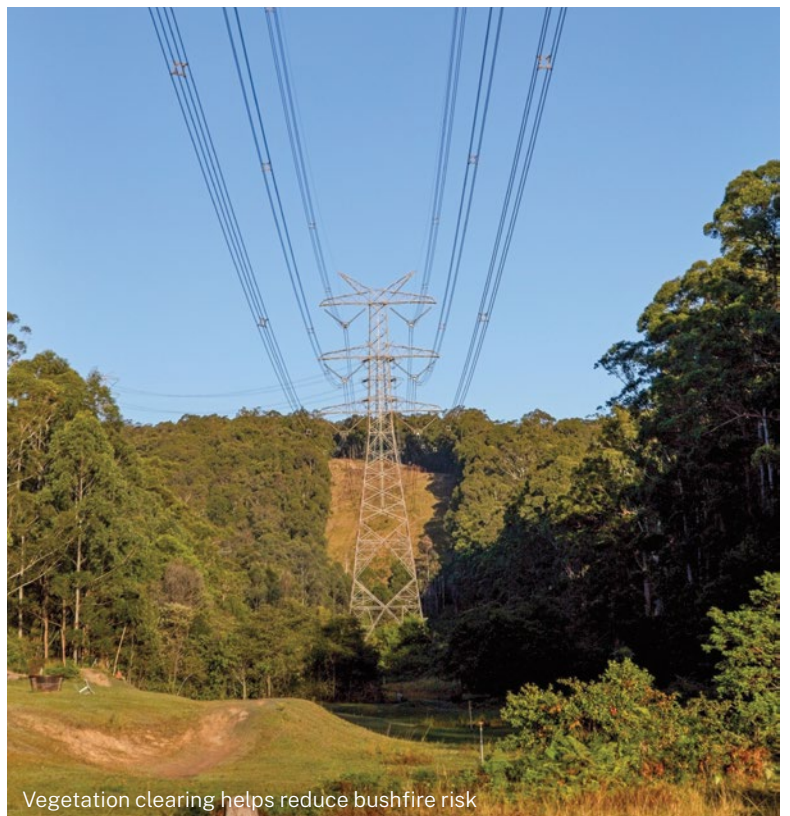
EnergyCo is leading the development of the Hunter Transmission Project to connect NSW energy consumers with a clean, affordable and reliable electricity supply. We understand the serious impact of bushfire in regional areas of NSW. We're committed to reducing bushfire risk during construction and operation of the project.

### What is an environmental impact statement?

As the Hunter Transmission Project (HTP) is a critical State significant infrastructure project, it requires an environmental impact statement (EIS) under the NSW planning system.

The EIS must assess the potential environmental, economic and community impacts of the HTP as well as the opportunities. It will also include ways to avoid, minimise and/or mitigate potential impacts.

The EIS will be submitted to the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure for assessment. Once the EIS is lodged there will be a public exhibition period and interested members of the community will be able to provide formal feedback on the proposed development directly to the department.



Vegetation clearing helps reduce bushfire risk



Existing transmission line

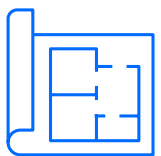
## How we assess and manage bushfire risk:



### During the design process

We consider the history of bushfires, the density and type of vegetation, topography, access constraints and other factors that may affect bushfire risk when planning the transmission route. We also consider how bushfires may behave when designing transmission lines and related infrastructure.

Transmission projects are designed and managed in line with the *Electricity Supply Act 1995* and Electricity Supply (Safety and Network Management) Regulation 2014 which requires the network operator to take all reasonable steps to make the network safe.



### Vegetation management and inspections

Once the HTP is operational, the network operator will be responsible for regular vegetation management to help reduce bushfire risk. This includes undertaking routine inspections of the transmission line to identify and fix any potential issues, and maintaining vegetation near the transmission lines that could create a bushfire or safety hazard.



### Firefighting protocols

Project infrastructure and facilities are designed to provide safe access for firefighting operations in line with standards set by the NSW Rural Fire Service. Site offices and facilities have appropriate equipment in case of fire and are built to be resilient to potential bushfire impacts.



### Bushfire risk assessment

As part of the HTP EIS, the bushfire risk assessment examines the potential bushfire risks during construction and operation of the project and outlines measures to mitigate them.

This assessment involves field surveys to assess vegetation, terrain and fire risk. It also involves analysis of bushfire and weather data, and bushfire behaviour modelling.



### Working with emergency services

EnergyCo and transmission network operators engage with emergency service providers such as the NSW Rural Fire Service during the planning, construction and operation of the HTP.

Measures to protect people, property and the environment from bushfires are developed in line with NSW Rural Fire Service guidelines.



### Emergency protocols

The HTP will have comprehensive emergency management and evacuation plans for construction and operation.

These consider bushfire emergency management and include procedures or restrictions for high fire danger periods, fuel storage, smoking areas, hot work, vehicle movements and other activities.

## Early bushfire findings

We're sharing some early findings from our bushfire risk assessment, along with potential mitigation measures to manage these impacts.

### Bushfire risk from the HTP

During construction, vegetation clearance and other construction work would take place in the HTP corridor, at switching station sites and at construction support locations. These activities are not at a scale which would materially alter risks to public safety from bushfires.

Effective, reliable and proven risk controls can be applied to construction activities to prevent accidental fire ignition and spread. With these measures in place, the likelihood of a fire starting or spreading due to construction work would remain very low.

### Bushfire risk to HTP infrastructure

The risk of bushfire damage to project infrastructure during operation is expected to be low. The 500 kV transmission lines and easements are designed to be highly resilient to bushfires. The Bayswater and Olney switching stations are located in bushfire-prone areas. To reduce risk, each site will have an asset protection zone (APZ) around it. This will prevent trees from falling onto the switching stations and ensures that radiant heat from an approaching bushfire is at levels unlikely to cause damage to switching station components.

By keeping vegetation clear and using fire-resistant materials in the station design, the project will have strong passive protection against bushfire impacts.

## Did you know?



500 kV transmission lines have safely operated in bushfire-prone areas throughout NSW for over 40 years without causing a fire



Made from non-combustible materials, these lines cannot catch fire



Remotely operated transmission lines don't need firefighter defence



Built to withstand extreme bushfire conditions, transmission lines are designed to prevent ignition



Regular vegetation management prevents fire spread and ensures compliance with safety regulations



## Key planning milestones

<b>July 2022</b>	The HTP was declared as critical State significant infrastructure by the Minister for Planning.
<b>May 2024</b>	A scoping report was submitted to the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI).
<b>Aug 2024</b>	Secretary's environmental assessment requirements (SEARs) were issued from DPHI.
<b>We are here 2024 to mid-2025</b>	The environmental impact statement (EIS) is prepared, undertaking technical assessments of the project's impacts and opportunities.
<b>Mid-2025</b>	EnergyCo lodges the EIS. DPHI places the EIS on public exhibition for a minimum of 4 weeks.
<b>Mid/late 2025</b>	EnergyCo will prepare a submissions report responding to the issues raised and lodge it with DPHI.
<b>2026</b>	NSW Government and Australian Government Ministers make final decisions.

### Have your say

Share your feedback on bushfire risk by completing our quick survey.



Scan the QR code for details.



## About the HTP

The Hunter Transmission Project is one of the State's most critical energy infrastructure projects.

It involves building a new overhead 500 kV transmission line of around 110 kilometres between Bayswater in the Upper Hunter and Olney in the Lower Hunter to connect the State's existing 500 kV transmission lines.

This will fix a missing link in the electricity network and help unlock the supply of electricity from the Central-West Orana and New England Renewable Energy Zones.



Existing transmission line

## Contact us

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

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 Scan the QR code for more information.



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