EnergyCo

NSW GOVERNMENT

Landscape character and visual impact assessment

Hunter Transmission Project environmental impact statement

March 2025

Minimising impacts to scenic views is a priority as we plan the Hunter Transmission Project. As part of the project's environmental impact statement, we're carrying out a detailed assessment of the potential landscape character and visual amenity impacts during construction and operation of the project. This includes identifying ways to reduce and manage these impacts.

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.

Existing transmission line

How we assess and manage visual impacts

The landscape and visual impact assessment will outline the project's potential impacts on the landscape and public and private views, and the proposed measures to reduce those impacts. The impact assessment involves:

Digital terrain modelling

To assess where the project would be visible.

Visual inspections

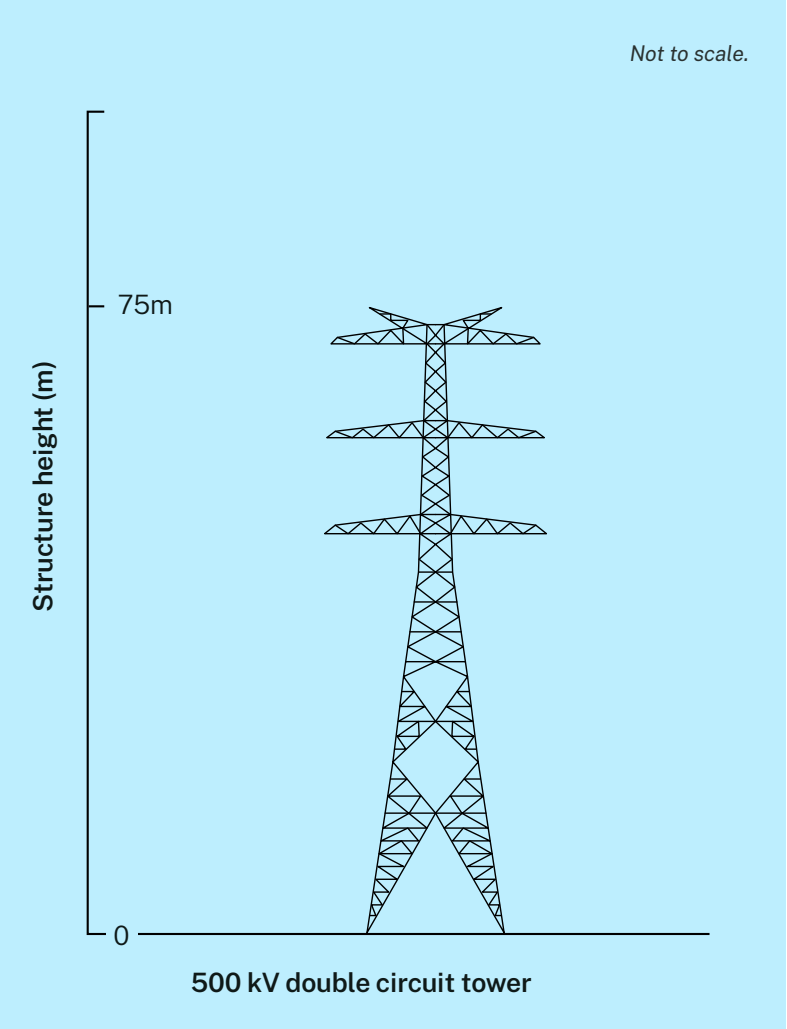
Taking photographs at a number of public and private viewpoints for a detailed technical assessment using specific criteria to determine a visual impact rating.

Private property assessments

To identify potential visual impacts on homes within approximately 1.6 kilometres.

Impact analysis

In line with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure Transmission Guideline: Technical Supplement for Landscape and Visual Assessment.



500 kV double circuit tower

We expect most of the HTP transmission towers will be up to 75 metres tall. A small number may be up to 85 metres tall. They'll generally be spaced between 300 and 600 metres apart. This distance may increase or decrease based on constraints along the corridor.

Existing transmission line

Existing transmission tower behind a ridgeline

Minimising visual impacts

We know that protecting scenic views and Aboriginal cultural sightlines is a priority for the community as we plan the Hunter Transmission Project.

The placement of each tower is carefully considered in light of its effects on people and private property, plants and animals, views of the landscape, and access during construction and operation.

Where possible, the transmission towers will be set back from the main ridgelines, rather than being placed on top – and this will help to preserve scenic views.

The transmission line alignment (including location of towers) will be confirmed later in the project during the detailed design phase. The final location of towers will be adjusted as needed to accommodate engineering constraints, site conditions and construction methods.

The locations of the 2 new switching stations in Olney and Bayswater have also been carefully selected to minimise visual impacts.

Distance to development	Viewpoint type	Viewpoint sensitivity	Scenic quality	Overall sensitivity	Occupied cells	Magnitude rating	Impact rating
556 m	Rural dwelling primary view	Moderate	High	High	6 (zero cells within cutoff)	Very low	Low

A visual impact example included in the Transmission Guideline: Technical Supplement for Landscape and Visual Assessment.

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.

Key planning milestones

July 2022
The HTP was declared as critical State significant infrastructure by the Minister for Planning.

May 2024
A scoping report was submitted to the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI).

Aug 2024
Secretary's environmental assessment requirements (SEARs) were issued from DPHI.

We are here
2024 to mid-2025
The environmental impact statement (EIS) is prepared, undertaking technical assessments of the project's impacts and opportunities.

Mid-2025
EnergyCo lodges the EIS. DPHI places the EIS on public exhibition for a minimum of 4 weeks.

Mid/late 2025
EnergyCo will prepare a submissions report responding to the issues raised and lodge it with DPHI.

2026
NSW Government and Australian Government Ministers make final decisions.


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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