North West Transmission Developments

Fact sheet | Land use – agriculture and forestry

April 2025

TasNetworks | Powering a Bright Future

This fact sheet provides information on the study undertaken to understand how land is used along the intended route and the impacts of construction and operation of the new transmission lines, towers and associated substations, switching station and access tracks.

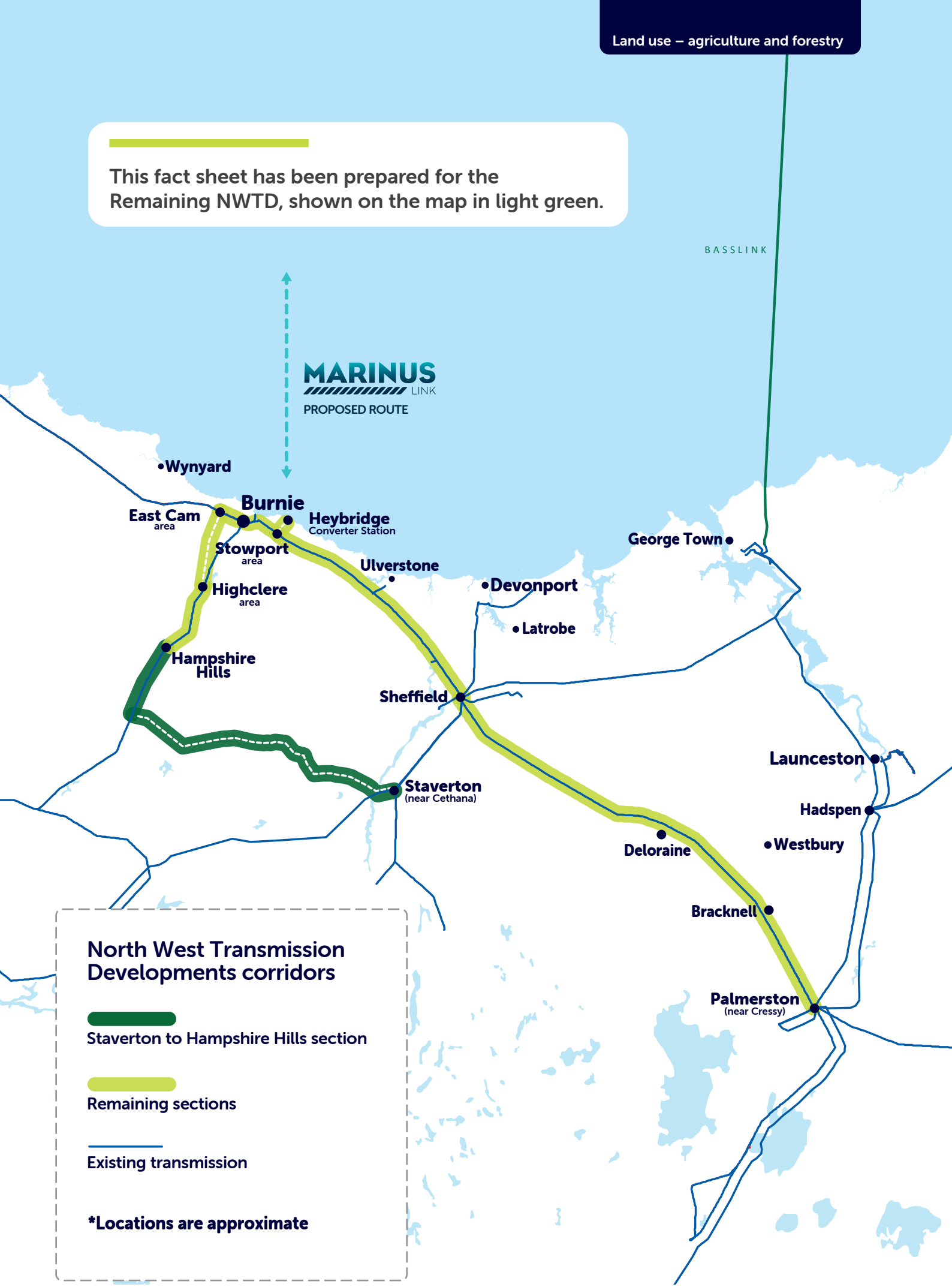
As Tasmania's energy demands increase, TasNetworks needs to strengthen the state's transmission network. The North West Transmission Developments (NWTD) will include new and upgraded overhead transmission lines (OHTLs), substations and switching stations.

NWTD will support new renewable energy developments and generate significant benefits and opportunities for Tasmanian communities and businesses. The project is proposed to be delivered across two stages. The first stage will link Cressy, Sheffield and Burnie, and the second stage will connect Staverton, Hampshire Hills and Burnie. Two spurs will be constructed between the Stowport area and Heybridge.

The Remaining NWTD includes constructing new double-circuit OHTLs, dismantling of the existing single circuit 220 kV OHTLs from Palmerston to Sheffield and Sheffield to Burnie, constructing a new switching station at Hampshire Hills, modifying the Palmerston, Sheffield and Burnie substations, modifying two short sections of the existing 110 kV Sheffield to Burnie OHTL, and modifying the 22 kV distribution network where the new OHTL crosses distribution lines.

A permit is required for the section of new OHTL between Staverton to Hampshire Hills, and a separate permit is required for the remaining sections of the project (Remaining NWTD).

This fact sheet has been prepared for the Remaining NWTD, shown on the map in light green.



Understanding land use

Land use refers to how humans use the landscape. Common uses include food production, forestry, nature conservation, water storage, urban development and more.

Technical specialists have undertaken a land use study to assess the extent to which the construction and operation of the project will impact agriculture and plantation forestry. A range of study methods were used including:

Undertaking a desktop analysis of the existing conditions, values and potential impacts

Reviewing data on agriculture and forestry for the affected area

Conducting site visits

Consulting with landholders and property managers.

The potential short and long-term impacts on agriculture and plantation forestry production values at a local and regional level were also assessed.

What is an easement?

TasNetworks owns, operates and maintains the electricity transmission and distribution network in Tasmania. Easements under transmission lines and around other electricity structures help to provide Tasmanians with a safe and reliable network.

An electricity easement is a legal right over land for the development, maintenance, and operation of electricity infrastructure. Easements restrict some activities that can be carried out in an area and provide TasNetworks staff with a 'right of way' so that they can safely operate and maintain the electricity network.

You can still do many things within TasNetworks transmission line easements including:

- Conduct most agricultural activities
- Undertake most recreational activities
- Erect minor structures (subject to conditions)
- Plant a garden provided that trees and shrubs are below 3 metres when fully grown
- Park vehicles.

For more information about what you can do within our easements, read the Transmission Line Easements fact sheet at tasnetworks.com.au

Since August 2022, the placement of approximately 48 towers have been adjusted along the preferred route as a result of engagement with landholders concerning their land use requirements such as the locations of irrigation systems

Community feedback

TasNetworks has been working with stakeholders, community members and landholders since 2019.

As part of conducting the forestry and agriculture study, meetings were held with a number of landholders in 2022 to discuss their concerns regarding the transmission lines and the potential impact on their land use. Feedback received related to:

- Concerns about impacts the construction and operation of the transmission lines may have on productivity and operations
- Disruption to infrastructure including restricted use, temporary loss of access and loss of future irrigation potential
- The importance of working with landholders to avoid damage to natural resources like vegetation, soil, water and the ecology of soil
- Concerns about biosecurity breaches and the introduction of weeds and disease.

Study findings

The new transmission lines will travel across both public and private land. Land along the route is currently used for a variety of different purposes, including agricultural, residential, forestry (native and plantation) and recreational use. It is also used for economic and cultural activities such as tourism.

This study focused on agriculture and plantation forestry production, and on activities undertaken by landholders and land managers to produce commodities for markets. The assessment identified that agriculture is the dominant land use within the project area. Four broad areas of agricultural land use identified along the preferred route include grazing, cropping, horticulture, and plantation forestry. Land use impacts that relate to other areas, such as native forestry, tourism, transport, or other industries will be managed in accordance with the measures outlined in their respective assessments.

The new transmission lines will require some existing easements to be widened during construction and some to be widened permanently. The width of some easements will be reduced once the new transmission lines are constructed and an existing line removed. Currently, the existing easement is 1,224 ha and will increase to 1,638 ha during construction. Once construction is complete and the existing transmission line between Palmerston and Sheffield is removed, the total easement area will be 1,167 ha — a final reduction of 57 ha.

During construction, the proposed agricultural production losses across grazing, cropping and horticulture were found to be between 0.6% and 1.3% of the annual regional production (indicative value of $4.8 to $10 million/year). This reduces to 0.3% and 0.8% during operations (indicative value of $2.3 to $5.8 million/year).

The study found the project impacts directly on 63 ha of forestry during construction. This represents around 0.1% of regional production, based on a regional forestry resource of 65,634 ha.

The greatest impacts on agriculture and forestry operations relate to biosecurity and food safety, with a moderate risk of these occurring. Impacts on biosecurity and food safety will need to be closely managed during construction. The increase in workers and vehicle movements means there is a higher risk of pests, weeds and diseases being introduced. The assessment also found that after management measures have been implemented the construction and operation of the transmission line will have very low to low impact on cropping, grazing and forestry production, and moderate impacts on horticultural production agricultural and forestry operations.

Managing impacts

Land use was considered when identifying the preferred route. Every effort has been made to locate the transmission towers and access tracks in locations that minimise impacts on agricultural land, plantation forestry and businesses.

Potential impacts on commercial agriculture and plantation forestry businesses are broad-ranging and vary between properties and seasons. These differences have been considered during the impact assessment.

Management measures have been identified to minimise impacts across various affected values including horticulture, cropping, grazing, and plantation forestry, including:

- Placing, accessing, and constructing temporary worksites and infrastructure in existing disturbed areas, such as existing tracks and clearings, to reduce disturbance to productive agricultural and forestry land, where practicable
- Designing and locating temporary and permanent project infrastructure to avoid or minimise impacts on farm and plantation assets and infrastructure, where practicable. This includes avoiding splitting up paddocks and plantation coupes, avoiding waterlogging soils and inundating, and taking into consideration future plans
- Implementing a weed management plan, land access management plan, noise and vibration management plan, and erosion and sedimentation control plan
- Negotiating property management plans with individual landholders.

TasNetworks will continue to work with landholders to minimise impacts on agricultural operations. Other measures being implemented to minimise impacts include construction scheduling and financial compensation.

TasNetworks is committed to working closely with landholders and property managers during construction and operation of the transmission lines to proactively manage impacts.

The property management plan is part of the project's Construction Access Licence and Option Agreement that is sought to be entered into with landholders to manage and compensate for disturbance and impact on property values and production. The plans will be consistent with the TasFarmers Farm Access Code of Conduct.

Property management plans will document baseline conditions of property and land management activity, including carrying capacity, cell grazing and crop rotations, and will include biosecurity requirements, farm food safety requirements, farm-specific environmental management requirements, on-farm workplace health and safety requirements, and soil conservation and rehabilitation process and standards to be achieved. The requirements of the property management plans will be implemented when accessing, using, and rehabilitating properties and working with landholders to minimise impacts on their land use.

Next steps

The Remaining NWTD permit application will be submitted to the Tasmanian Planning Commission (TPC) for review and consideration. The TPC will place the application on public exhibition, including the full versions of all technical reports.

All members of the community will then be provided with the opportunity to make a written submission on the application when it is placed on public exhibition. We anticipate this to occur during May 2025.

The TPC will consider all submissions received and then hold hearings to provide community members with an additional opportunity to have a say. It is possible that the TPC could require additional information to address any matters raised in submissions or hearings. The TPC will then determine if the project will be approved or not approved. If the project is approved the permit would be subject to a number of conditions.

In addition, the project will need to be approved by the Commonwealth Government to satisfy the requirements of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwth)* before works can commence.

We encourage you to sign up to receive the NWTD newsletter for regular updates on the project at www.tasnetworks.com.au/nwtd

Get in touch

To learn more about the North West Transmission Developments:

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