

Social Impact Assessment (SIA)

North West Transmission Developments - March 2021



Social Impact Assessment (SIA)

TasNetworks is committed to working with communities and businesses to explore how the development of the Staverton to Hampshire Hills transmission line can maximise benefits and minimise impacts.

As part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which is currently being prepared for this project, we are undertaking a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) to identify the project's potential social impacts and opportunities. This includes a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

What is a Social Impact Assessment?

A SIA is an assessment of the social impacts of a proposed decision or action, namely the impacts on affected groups of people and on their way of life, life chances, health, culture and capacity to sustain these. It is one of the many specialist studies (including environmental and economic studies) that will contribute to the EIS submitted as part of the development application for the Staverton to Hampshire Hills transmission route.



What is assessed as part of a SIA?

Social impacts are changes to one or more of the following:

- **People's way of life** – that is, how they live, work, play and interact with one another on a day-to-day basis;
- **Culture** – that is, their shared beliefs, customs, values and language or dialect;
- **Community** – its cohesion, stability, character, services and facilities;
- **Political systems** – the extent to which people are able to participate in decisions that affect their lives, the level of democratisation that is taking place, and the resources provided for this purpose;
- **Environment** – the quality of the air and water people use; the availability and quality of the food they eat; the level of hazard or risk, dust and noise they are exposed to; the adequacy of sanitation, their physical safety, and their access to and control over resources;
- **Health and wellbeing** – health is a state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity;
- **Personal and property rights** – particularly whether people are economically affected, or experience personal disadvantage which may include a violation of their civil liberties;
- **Fears and aspirations** – their perceptions about their safety, their fears about the future of their community, and their aspirations for their future and the future of their children.

Source: Vanclay, F. 2003 *International Principles for Social Impact Assessment. Impact Assessment & Project Appraisal* 21(1), 5-11.

How does the SIA fit into the broader environmental approvals processes?

The Tasmanian Planning Commission finalised the planning criteria for the North West Transmission Upgrades Project under section 12(5) of the *Major infrastructure Development Approvals Act 1999* on 1 February 2021.

This planning criteria outlines the requirements that TasNetworks must adhere to when preparing an EIS. These requirements have been set based on guidance provided by the Tasmanian Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE).

The SIA will address the requirement outlined under Schedule 2: *Environmental impact statement requirements, 5.2 Socio-economic aspects*, which states:

Briefly describe the existing social and economic environment that may be affected by the proposal, which may include information on the following:

(a) A summary of the social or demographic characteristics of the population living in the vicinity of the proposal site, identifying any special characteristics which may make people more sensitive to impacts from the proposal than might otherwise be expected.

(b) A summary of the characteristics of the regional economy, and local economy, on a sector by sector basis.

What else is assessed as part of the environmental approvals process?

This project, along with all projects to be completed as part of the North West Transmission Developments, will require an EIS. The EIS is to be assessed by the Tasmanian Planning Commission, as part of the approvals process and prior to works commencing.

Each EIS will need to address the following key issues:

- Construction, commissioning, operation and maintenance of the proposed transmission line
- Project alternatives
- An overview of what public consultation has been undertaken
- An assessment of environmental and socio-economic aspects of the existing environment

- Details of potential impacts and management of any threatened fauna, flora and vegetation communities
- Details of potential impacts and management of any other biodiversity and natural values
- Details of potential impacts and management of air quality, surface water quality, noise, public health
- Details of potential impacts and management of waste, dangerous goods, environmentally hazardous materials, greenhouse gases and ozone depleting substances
- An assessment of potential socio-economic issues following construction
- Details of any potential environmental impacts of the proposal on any significant off-site infrastructure or facilities
- An assessment of the potential cumulative impacts of the proposal

Each EIS must also provide an overall conclusion as to the environmental acceptability of each proposal, including discussion on compliance with the ecologically sustainable development principles, and the objects and requirements of the Commonwealth's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

How can I find out more?

TasNetworks remains committed to working closely with community, businesses and landowners as planning for Marinus Link and the proposed North West transmission developments continues.

More information on the Social Impact Assessment process, together with updates on engagement opportunities, can be found at: <https://talkwith.tasnetworks.com.au/north-west-transmission-upgrades>



You can contact us with any questions about the proposed developments to the North West Tasmanian transmission network via our project email and phone line.

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