

Proposed North West Transmission Developments Environmental Management

November 2020



Weeds, water and fire: how we manage our environment

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TasNetworks manages 12,000 hectares of existing easements with a range of vegetation management practices and controls in place. Along with our transmission network predecessors, we have a long history of owning, operating and maintaining 220 kV transmission corridors and switching stations in Tasmania.

This fact sheet provides information on how we manage our environmental impact, including the processes we have in place to:

- prevent the spread of weeds and disease
- prevent water pollution caused by our activities and ensure watercourses are protected, and
- ensure effective vegetation management to manage fire risk.



Protecting the environment and minimising impact

TasNetworks assesses our impacts and takes measures to reduce the environmental risks of our work.

We work towards continually improving our environmental performance by:

- ensuring our people and those working on our behalf are aware of and understand the required environmental standards and procedures
- taking action to identify and prevent environmental incidents or problems from occurring
- thoroughly investigating any environmental incidents
- providing and implementing solutions to environmental problems, where appropriate, and
- reporting on environmental problems and incidents as soon as they occur.

We are also integrating sustainability principles into our activities by using resources efficiently, minimising waste and reducing negative physical

impacts on the environment.

Ecological and cultural field surveys, investigations and assessments are an important part of planning for the North West Transmission Developments.

Assessing environmental and cultural factors early in the planning and investigative stages of the project will assist in the reduction and mitigation of risks.

Seasonal surveys are required for ecological surveys and typically extend over a year or more to ensure flora and fauna seasonal patterns are captured.

Other factors considered in the planning and investigative stages include:

- potential impacts to threatened flora and fauna species
- mapping of sensitive ecological areas, e.g. old growth native forest and eagle nests, and
- assessment of social and cultural values including land uses, food and fibre growing areas, tourism sites, Aboriginal artefacts and visual amenity.



Weeds and disease

TasNetworks takes all practical steps to prevent the spread of weeds and disease.

We have processes in place that seek to ensure our activities do not contribute to the spread of weeds and / or disease. This includes:

- Ensuring our people are familiar with Tasmania's declared weeds and biosecurity risks
- Having processes in place to undertake and complete work without spreading weeds or biosecurity risks. This includes:
 - » undertaking environmental risk assessment for all of our field activities, including the identification of weeds and biosecurity risks within the area of work
 - » control measures to prevent the spread of identified weeds and biosecurity risks
 - » closely monitoring and managing working from 'clean' areas to 'weed infested' areas if weed infested areas cannot be avoided, and
 - » checking vehicles are free of plant material and mud prior to leaving the work site, where practical.

We also undertake strategic weed management operations in partnership with key land managers and stakeholders, and are a signatory to the Charter for Working on Private Farmland, developed by the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, Aurora Energy, TasNetworks, TasWater and Tasmanian Irrigation. The charter makes sure that each person understands their rights and responsibilities when these organisations and businesses are required to access and work on private farms.

Biosecurity management is critical on this project given the intensive cultivation along many areas of the proposed route alignment.

We are committed to working with you and recognise that effective prevention and management of identified weeds, pathogens and pests is a high priority for landholders.

We will work with you to identify potential biosecurity risks and develop effective and appropriate management methods throughout the project lifecycle.

Local knowledge is essential for effective weed management and we encourage you to provide input wherever possible. We also work cooperatively with government agencies in our shared responsibility to establish management requirements appropriate to the level of risk.

We are committed to working with you regarding biosecurity management and engaging in proactive and open discussions on biosecurity requirements before entering your property to safeguard the environment.



Water

Causing water pollution is an offence under the Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994 and it relates to 'any matter other than clean rainwater entering or with the potential to enter a waterway or stormwater system'.

To prevent water pollution from our activities, we implement the following measures:

- ensuring our people are familiar with erosion and sediment control, removal of waste water from work sites and working around watercourses and river systems
- providing training, regulatory manuals, health and safety oversight, mapping and in-depth knowledge around river class systems for our people, and
- carefully managing the application of herbicides and pesticides for weed management due to the impact on the water cycle.

Fire

Wildfire caused by transmission lines is extremely rare. Our assets are protected from lightning strikes and have mechanisms and certain design features that eliminate electrical 'arcing'.

Our asset design and maintenance program places emphasis on appropriate clearance of vegetation from transmission network assets through the creation and maintenance of easements, in combination with effective vegetation management.

Reduced vegetation within transmission easements also means that easements can serve as a natural firebreak, which has been evident in recent wildfire events in Tasmania.



How can I **find out more?**

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