

Landscape and visual impact assessment

North West Transmission Developments - August 2020



Landscape and visual amenity

TasNetworks understands that the visual impact of transmission lines and other electricity infrastructure in the landscape is an important issue for the community.

This fact sheet provides an update on how landscape and visual amenity are being addressed in designing the proposed Staverton to Hampshire Hills transmission line, and assessing impacts of the proposed line.

The term 'visual amenity' refers to the views and surroundings that create the backdrop to an area.

Development of overhead transmission lines changes the landscape and impacts visual amenity. The extent of change and impact on views varies along a chosen route and according to the values of residents and visitors. TasNetworks seeks to understand what landscapes and views in the vicinity of the proposed Staverton to Hampshire Hills transmission line are important.

Feedback coupled with a widely accepted landscape and visual impact assessment method will enable the magnitude of the impacts to be understood and strategies to be identified for reducing and managing the impacts.

What work has been completed so far?

TasNetworks has completed route selection to identify the preferred route between Staverton and Hampshire Hills. The 18-month process considered a range of factors and constraints in the development of transmission infrastructure. Evaluation of the route options to identify prudent and feasible routes included:

- **cost,**
- **constructability,**
- **transmission system integrity and performance, and**
- **environmental and social aspects including occupation, land use, native vegetation, threatened ecological communities and species, planning controls and geomorphology.**

Landscape and visual amenity were key considerations in route selection.

To gain a better appreciation for the landscape and visual impacts, TasNetworks commissioned a 'viewshed' analysis. **Viewshed analyses determine the area of land visible from various points or 'viewpoints' in proximity to the proposed transmission line.** The viewshed analysis included consideration of defining features within the landscape, such as topography, vegetation, land use and settlement, and land tenure. Findings from the analysis informed review and refinement of the proposed route, as did feedback from affected landowners, land managers and communities.

What work is about to commence?

A landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) will build on the initial viewshed analysis and characterise the features that define the landscape, the viewing experience and values that people have in the existing landscape. This information will be used to identify and evaluate how the landscape and views will change as a result of the development of the proposed transmission line from Staverton to Hampshire Hills along the preferred route.

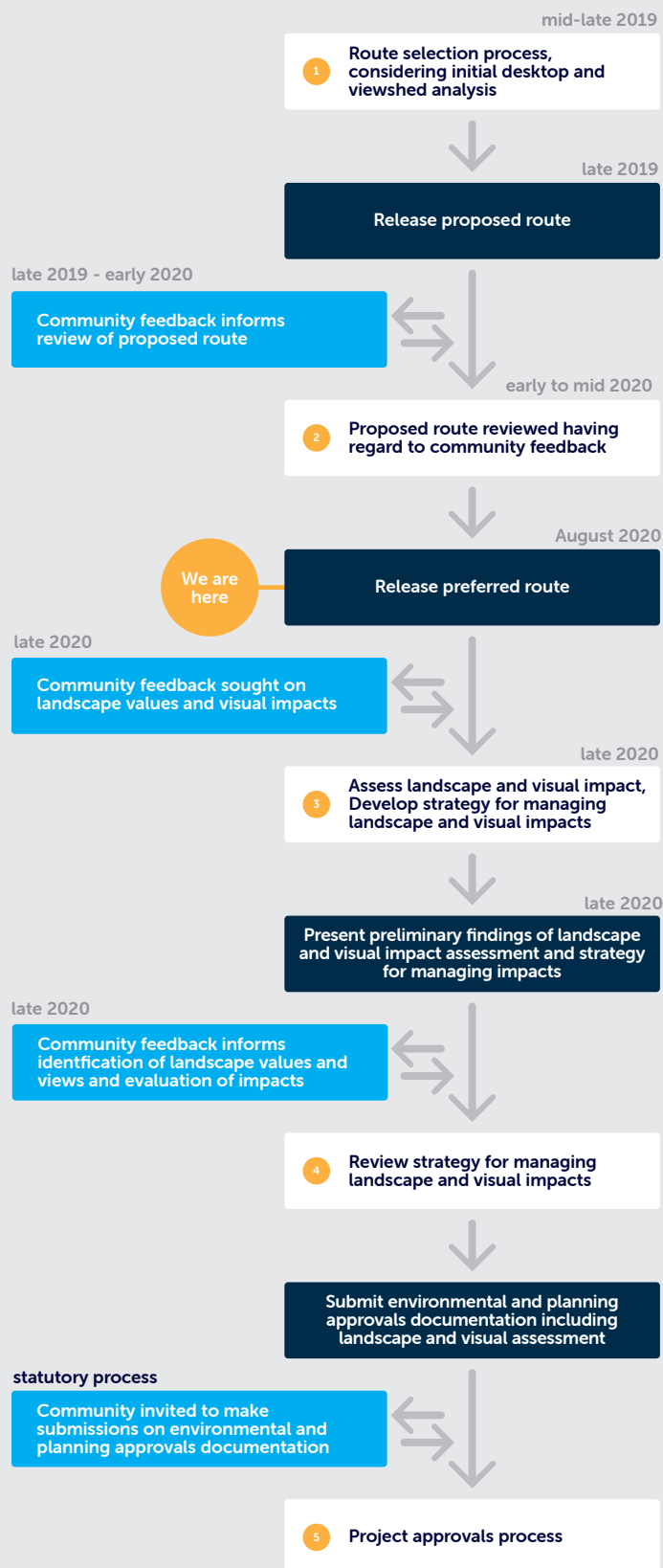
The assessment process will evaluate how the landscape is viewed, experienced and valued and determine the magnitude of the impact the proposed developments will have. This determination takes into account the type of infrastructure to be built, the sensitivity of the landscape to change, and the viewing experience and / or values of the landscape.

The aim of the visual impact assessment process is to establish management objectives for protection of the landscape character and propose strategies that will assist in reducing or managing landscape and visual impacts. Strategies can include design responses.

How is the community being involved?

TasNetworks will be seeking community feedback to better understand the important views and amenity values that may be impacted by the project.

The assessment process for landscape and visual amenity, including the opportunities for community involvement, are shown in the flowchart on this page.



Once prepared, TasNetworks will make the initial findings of the landscape and visual impact assessment available and invite community comment and feedback. The initial findings will include a proposed strategy for reducing and managing the landscape and visual impacts, where possible, which will be developed in consultation with the community.

TasNetworks will release a report documenting the findings of the landscape and visual impact assessment, including the residual landscape and visual impact of the proposed developments. The report will show what will be seen, and from where, using photomontages of the proposed route and findings from the viewshed analysis. This report will be released with the environmental and planning approvals documentation.

What is the landscape and visual impact **assessment method based on?**

Since the early 1980s, the Forestry Commission of Tasmania (now Sustainable Timber Tasmania) has adopted the United States of America's US Forest Service system, modified for the Tasmanian context, to guide its practices. The commission published its method in *A Manual for Forest Landscape Management in 1990*. The manual was revised in 2006.

This method is the primary landscape and visual impact assessment and management method employed by Tasmanian professionals.

The landscape and visual impact assessment specialists who will undertake the assessment have adopted and refined this method to benefit from advancements in global information systems (GIS) technology and advances in international guidelines and practice including the United Kingdom's highly-regarded *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (third edition), the Landscape Institute.



Field Surveys



Inspiring Place, which is a specialist service provider for landscape and visual impact assessment, will undertake field surveys.

The field survey will involve taking photos and videos of the landscape in its current condition. This will involve:

- **driving on public roads from which the proposed transmission line will be seen;**
- **walking well-known and promoted walking tracks; and**
- **visiting scenic lookouts, particularly those promoted to visitors.**

The photos and videos will be used to understand the current landscape character of the area including landform, vegetation and scenic viewpoints, and how it is viewed from where.

TasNetworks will also invite communities and visitors to share the landscape values that are important to them and their viewing experience. TasNetworks will provide further information about how communities and visitors can share this information and their views and concerns.



How do I find out more?

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