

Project EnergyConnect is a landmark infrastructure project that will deliver the first new electricity interconnector between Australian states in 15 years. An electricity interconnector is a connection that allows power to flow between regions in the National Electricity Market (NEM), providing access to a larger number of renewable electricity generators.

To maximise the benefits of Project EnergyConnect, the transmission line route needs to connect Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) in South Australia (SA), New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria, supporting future renewable energy projects to connect into the national grid.

A rigorous route selection process was undertaken to determine where the interconnector would connect and assess the route alternatives between these connection points.

Step One: Identifying start and end points

From 2016, ElectraNet worked with the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) and a range of stakeholders to find the best way to connect the states to get the most benefit for the NEM. This process is known as Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T), and is required before any major investment into the electricity network is made.

The RIT-T process concluded that an interconnector between Robertstown in SA and Wagga Wagga in NSW, with connection into Victoria, would provide the most benefit to consumers and to grid stability. In addition, the interconnector was required to cross Renewable Energy Zones to enable future renewable energy projects to connect into the national grid. This meant the start and end points were fixed.

Step Two: Establishing the Investigation Corridor

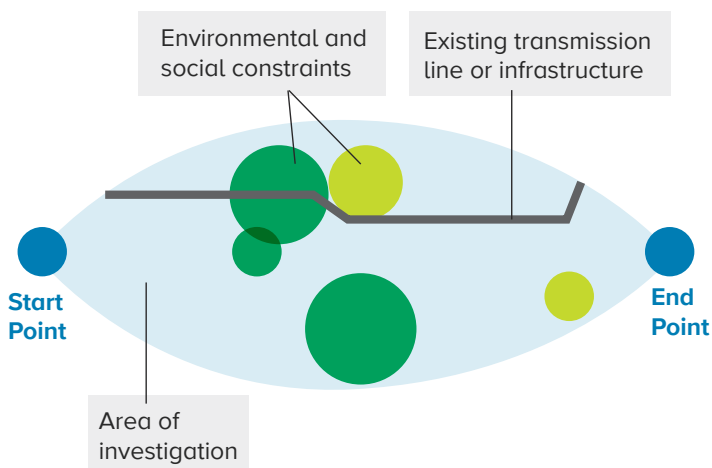
While the most cost-effective alignment for the interconnector would have been to take a straight line between the start and end points, this approach was not viable for a range of environmental, social, land use and engineering reasons.

As such, ElectraNet carried out a range of investigations and stakeholder engagement to identify constraints and opportunities to minimise environmental impact between Robertstown and the SA - NSW border.

- Constraints included intensive agriculture, licensed airstrips, conservation areas and known cultural heritage sites, native vegetation, and protected species.
- Opportunities included alignment of the new transmission line with existing transmission infrastructure, fence lines, roads and access tracks.

Identifying areas to be avoided and opportunities to minimise potential impacts assisted in establishing an initial 20km-wide investigation corridor.

Regional constraints and opportunities



Step Three: Refining the Area of Investigation

After the investigation corridor was established, ElectraNet spent considerable time investigating potential route options in SA by conducting a range of studies within the investigation corridor. Investigation findings were tested with stakeholders and assisted in narrowing the investigation corridor for further evaluation and engagement.

Step Four: Selecting the Preferred Transmission Line Corridor

ElectraNet further explored multiple micro-route options within the investigation corridor through a detailed Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA), with input from specialist studies and in close consultation with potentially affected landholders, Traditional Owner groups and State and Commonwealth government authorities.

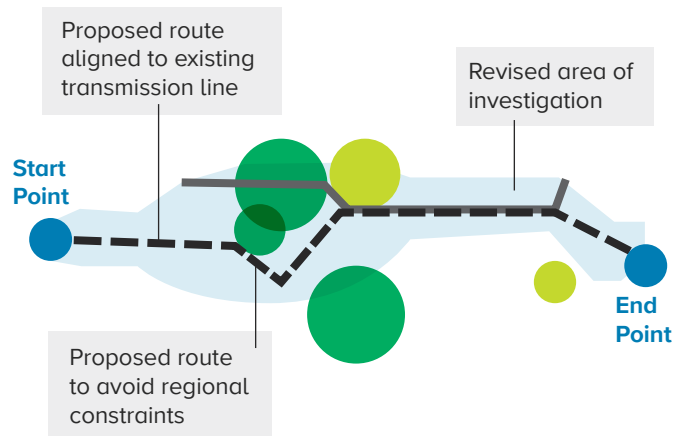
Based on the results of the MCA and consultation, ElectraNet identified a 1km transmission line corridor which was the subject of assessment in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Step Five: Route Approval

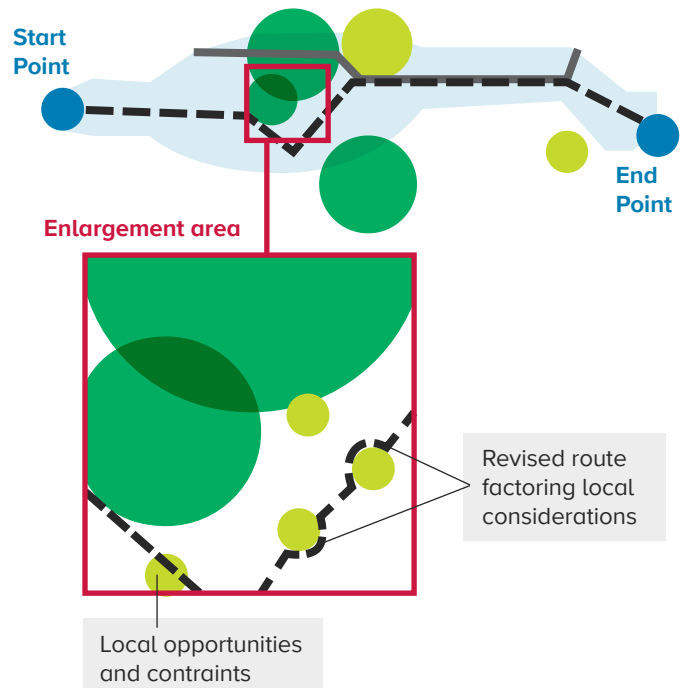
The final route was approved following submission of the EIS. Some micro-siting may occur during the detailed design process to minimise potential impacts on environmental and social receptors.

ElectraNet will continue landholder negotiations, stakeholder engagement, detailed environmental and cultural heritage surveys, and environmental management planning during this stage.

Refining the area of investigation



Local considerations



Stay connected

You can view the EIS, be kept up to date with Project information and provide feedback by visiting the online engagement room on our website or by contacting the Project team.

W www.ProjectEnergyConnect.com.au
E ProjectEnergyConnect@electranet.com.au
P 1800 560 577 (free call)