

Media Release

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EnergyConnect becomes a leader in sustainability achieving a Leading IS rating

EnergyConnect has become the first electricity transmission project in Australia to receive an official sustainability rating in recognition of a series of industry-leading initiatives in the design and delivery of the critical interconnector.

The [Infrastructure Sustainability Council](#) has awarded Australia's largest transmission project the highest Design Rating of 'Leading'.

CEO Brett Redman said: "Transgrid and our construction partner Elecnor Australia are going above and beyond to set the benchmark in sustainability best practice for the future pipeline of energy transmission projects across the country.

"We are delivering real sustainability outcomes with innovative solutions to reducing our carbon footprint, minimising the use of energy and water, protecting valuable biodiversity, decreasing waste, and building in resilience against forecast climate impacts.

"Transgrid is delivering the nation's transition to a clean energy future in a sustainable way by designing and constructing our critical transmission infrastructure to optimise environmental, social and economic outcomes."

Key sustainability measures being implemented on EnergyConnect include:

- A 35% reduction in clearing on the western alignment (South Australian border to Buronga) and 11% decrease on the eastern section (Buronga to Wagga) to preserve valuable biodiversity including trees up to 1,000 years old. Hundreds of thousands of trees have been physically inspected by arborists to assess their archaeological, ecological and cultural significance. Many trees including Aboriginal scar trees have been retained within the transmission line easement while still complying with vegetation clearance requirements. Annual inspections will ensure the lines stay clear to prevent bushfires
- Using guyed towers that require 21% less steel and 15% less concrete to construct compared to conventional self-supporting structures
- Locating transmission line structures to avoid valuable biodiversity and culturally sensitive sites
- The use of low carbon concrete in tower footings and substations. Contractors are required to use concrete with 35% supplementary cementitious materials (SCMs) and 30% replacement of virgin fine aggregate with manufactured sand (where available)
- Replacing tree hollows with nestboxes to provide fauna habitat for local species, with more than 1,500 installed on the western alignment, and thousands more to follow on the eastern section

- A 31% reduction in construction water use by using non-water based dust suppression alternatives and grey water from worker accommodation camps
- A 78% replacement of potable water with non-potable sources including treated grey water from worker accommodation camps
- Enduring benefits for local communities along the project alignment including the multi-million-dollar Legacy 100 program to train Australia's own transmission line construction workforce and a \$2 million scholarship fund for engineering students at Charles Sturt University
- Reducing waste to landfill including recycling 400 tonnes of wooden pallets and 50,000 cans and bottles from worker accommodation camps
- Comprehensive physical climate change risk assessments to safeguard the new infrastructure against the changing climate through the introduction of treatment and mitigation strategies in the design, construction and operation of EnergyConnect.

Elecnor Australia Operations Director Samuel Basanta Lopez said: "This is a significant project milestone that occurred across nearly all project disciplines and in collaboration with Transgrid. We are immensely proud of the result.

"As a Project Team we strive to maximise positive environmental, social and economic outcomes throughout all stages of our design and construction activities. We value sustainable development and believe respect for the environment and the community in which we operate are fundamental to business success."

Infrastructure Sustainability Council Acting CEO Patrick Hastings said: "Congratulations to the EnergyConnect team and Transgrid on achieving a Leading IS Design Rating. Through this project they have demonstrated their commitment to sustainability by being the first to achieve a Design Rating on a transmission project. EnergyConnect is well-positioned to deliver an asset that will provide a positive ecological benefit while also minimising its contribution to GHG emissions. This is a monumental step for transmission projects and an encouraging sign of progression in the sector."

Mr Redman said: "We are on the frontline of sustainable development, leading the nation's transition to a clean energy future. It is a true honour that EnergyConnect has become the first electricity transmission project in Australia to receive an Infrastructure Sustainability Council Design Rating and a critical step towards cementing our reputation as a recognised leader in sustainability."

For more information about EnergyConnect visit: <https://www.transgrid.com.au/projects-innovation/energyconnect>

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