Farming with transmission

WIMMERA RENEWABLE ENERGY SOLUTIONS

We're committed to working with landholders to ensure the Wimmera's important farming operations continue with minimal disruption.

Farming and transmission lines already co-exist across Australia.

The Wimmera is a major agricultural and food producing region. As we develop the proposed route for WiRES, we will work with landholders to ensure agriculture and farming operations continue with minimal disruption.

The construction of the project is many years away. This means we have time to work together with farmers and landholders to minimise the impact on both the land and agricultural businesses.

Maximising land available for farming

WiRES will be designed to allow agricultural machinery up to 5 metres tall to pass under the lines without any requirement for a permit. This should cater for most common machinery in use today.

- WiRES will use steel monopoles rather than lattice towers.
- The proposed monopoles can generally range from 35 to 45 metres in height on average – around half that of 500 kV lattice towers.
- WiRES will run two double circuit 330 kV transmission lines in a 60 metre corridor. Poles will be spaced approximately every 350 metres along the route.
- Monopoles are anchored to a concrete footing with an average diameter of up to three metres. This minimises their footprint compared to square transmission towers.

Farming with transmission lines

WiRES is committed to working with landholders to understand how they use their land so we can design the project to best fit current and future needs.

Once the final route and design has been finalised, further information will be made available to landholders that is specifically tailored to their property and business needs.

Farming with easements

Easements grant rights to a third party for specific activities on the owner's land. The third party can only undertake those prescribed activities in the easement, and the ownership of the land does not change.

For WiRES, we expect an easement (or right of way) of around 60 metres wide will be required to construct, operate and maintain the transmission line infrastructure.

More information on easements and landholder compensation are included in the Landholder Guide.

Permitted agricultural activities

Overleaf is a summary of how common and other agricultural activities can operate with overhead transmission lines.

Permitted agricultural activities

A wide range of agricultural activities are permitted within 330 kV transmission easements. These activities can be undertaken with no or very few conditions applying.

WiRES is committed to working with individual landholders to understand how they currently use their land and designing the project to best fit their current and future agricultural uses.

Livestock grazing
Livestock are permitted within 330 kV easements and no conditions apply.

Crops and vegetation
Mature trees and shrub growth of up to 3 metres in height is permitted in easements. For vegetation above 3 metres high, a safety assessment is required. Ground-growing crops are permitted to grow within 5 metres of the poles - subject to obtaining permission, and provided access for maintenance works is maintained.

Vehicles
Vehicles, agricultural equipment, cranes, excavators and similar are permitted to travel under the lines and operate up to 5 metres in height (inclusive of personnel and all equipment) without a safety assessment.

WiRES recognises that some machinery used in commercial scale agribusiness might exceed the 5 metre limitation. If required, infrastructure can be designed to suit those needs.

Trees and shrubs
Planting of new trees and shrubs must consider height requirements (up to 3 metres high) and not impede access along the easement for construction or operation.

Orchards
Orchards are permitted within 330 kV easements provided the 3 metre height restriction is observed.

Farm sheds
Permits may be issued for domestic garages (non-habitable), carports, silos, and garden sheds to encroach upon the easement, provided specific conditions are satisfied. For example:

- maintaining ample safety clearance from towers and overhead conductors
- three metre height limitations
- constructed primarily with non-flammable materials, appropriately earthed, and ensuring detachment from dwellings.

Fencing
When earthing of fixed metallic parts on existing fences is required for safety, WiRES will cover the cost.

Other permitted agricultural activities

Other permitted agricultural activities around and under 330 kV transmission lines include:

- stubble burning
- grain shifting augers (up to 5 metres)
- seeders and harvesters (up to 5 metres)
- lifting wet heads from sunken bores with approval
- firefighting units - private and aerial
- GPS signals
- dams (beyond 30 metres of any pole)
- construction - minor activities including digging and earthmoving but no stockpiling above 2 metres within the easement and no excavation adjacent to a high voltage electrical apparatus without a permit
- use of centre pivot and lateral moving irrigators (up to 5 metres high).

Non-permitted agricultural activities

There are very few non-permitted agricultural activities within the 330 kV transmission easement. They include:

- aerial crop spraying
- manned and unmanned aircraft (e.g. drones)
- use of large rain gun irrigators.

These are prohibited for safety reasons and the potential damage they could cause to electricity infrastructure.

For more information about the project

www.wiresco.com.au
1300 096 258
info@wiresco.com.au

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