

Expert Conclave – WRL IAC

Subject Matter: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment -

Methodology

- Date of conclave: 23rd October 2025
- Time of conclave commencement: 13:30
- Paused at 3:30
- Recommenced at 4:15
- Time of conclave conclusion: 4:55

Attendees: Mr Hayden Burge (Landform Architects), Mr Steve Schutt (Hansen Partnership), Mr Brendan Papworth (Papworth Design) and Mr Christopher Goss (Orbit Solutions)

Date of finalisation of conclave report: 24th October 2025

Introduction

As set out in the IAC Directions letter dated 3rd October 2025:

- Direction 5: The landscape and visual expert meeting must be restricted to the matters addressed in the Part A evidence (Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology)

The purpose of the conclave is to:

- Discuss and record points of agreement and disagreement on LVIA methodology matters raised in Part A evidence, and the methodology of Technical Report D.

The following table identifies the key methodological issues raised by the experts in relation to each aspect of those requirements. Each expert has recorded their commentary or position in the corresponding column.

Mr Hayden Burge



Mr Steve Schutt



Mr Brendan Papworth



Mr Christopher Goss



Main Issue	Sub issue	Hayden Burge Technical Report D	Steve Schutt Peer Review	Brendan Papworth Hepburn	Christopher Goss Melton	Position
Study Area and Zones of Visual Influence	The study area of 9.2 km is appropriate.					All Agree
Review of Existing Conditions	Landscape character and viewer sensitivity is appropriate for the scale of the project and the study area.	<p>Viewer sensitivity is determined by the use or nature of the viewing location. Landscape Character Units describe the sensitivity of the area to change.</p> <p>Two Landscape Character Units add definition to farming areas in the Hepburn Shire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Landscape Character Unit 7 – Volcanic Cones</i> ▪ <i>Landscape Character Unit 9 – Heritage Landscapes.</i> 		A single “viewer sensitivity” rating for each Character Unit is, in my opinion, insufficient in capturing the range of sensitivity one might find for each Unit <i>and</i> do not adequately capture the unique landscapes in Hepburn.	<p>No Concerns Raised in relation to Technical Report D.</p> <p>Landscape character can be examined at multiple scales in order from the broadest to the most granular, such as:</p> <p><i>I. Landscape Character Types</i></p> <p><i>II. Landscape Character Areas</i></p> <p><i>III. Landscape Character Zones, and where appropriate Landscape Character Subzones</i></p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Hayden Burge</p> <p>Steve Schutt</p> <p>Partially Agree</p> <p>Chris Goss</p> <p>Brendan Papworth</p>
Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)	ZTVs are a starting point only and must be supplemented with field verification and contextual analysis (e.g. vegetation, topography, structures).					All Agree
Stakeholder Engagement	Sufficient to satisfactorily capture the important issues.	<p>Section 6 of Technical Report D sets out the consultation activities undertaken across the whole of the Project. Included were presentations to the TRG seeking their support for access to dwellings.</p> <p>Although there were limitations on hosting Sessions in Hepburn, residents from Hepburn have attended sessions in other areas, including Brown Hill and Coghills Creek.</p> <p>It was clear from these sessions (and dwelling inspections) that local communities value Volcanic Cones, Heritage Mining features and waterbodies. <i>Landscape Character Unit 7 – Volcanic Cones</i> and, <i>Landscape Character Unit 9 – Heritage Landscapes</i> features in that are in the farming zone. Where possible, the Projects route avoids directly impacting these areas.</p> <p>There were no new Significant or sensitive locations identified in Submissions that were not considered by Technical Report D.</p>		<i>The inability to be able to get permission to access the properties and assess the visual impacts speaks to a potential shortcoming in the success of the consultation process and the veracity of the overall visual impact assessment report.</i>		<p>Agree</p> <p>Hayden Burge</p> <p>Steve Schutt</p> <p>Chris Goss</p> <p>Partially Agree</p> <p>Brendan Papworth</p>
Viewpoint Selection Public Domain	Impact on sensitive, significant landscape values, landforms and communities - <i>Viewpoints must represent significant, sensitive, and high-impact locations</i>					All Agree
	Views from highways and tourist routes are sufficiently assessed.	The assessment of the Projects impacts on landscapes and communities in the Hepburn Shire has assessed a range of views and settings that are representative of Hepburn Shire.	The methodology explains that the assessment of visual impact is undertaken on the basis of selected view locations and informed in part by photomontage images prepared to visually demonstrate the manner in which the Project will appear from those view locations. The	<p>Impacts from the public domain is significantly limited due to the nature of the existing landscapes and communities in Hepburn Shire and the experiences of travelling through it.</p> <p>The methodology makes no mention of how you would assess the visual impact</p>	<p>No Concerns Raised in relation to Technical Report D:</p> <p><i>4.2.1 Representative Viewpoints: Selected to represent the experience of different types of visual receptor, where larger numbers of viewpoints cannot all</i></p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Hayden Burge</p> <p>Steve Schutt</p> <p>(in the context of the Project scale and landscape)</p>

		<p>Section 11.1 has considered views from the townships of Creswick, Allendale, Smeaton, Kingston and Newlyn.</p> <p>Sections 11.3 and 11.4 have assessed views from a range of locations within the Hepburn Shire.</p> <p>Viewpoints T9, PVC 8 and PVC 9 have considered views from locations along the Midland Highway north and south of the Route, and include photomontages.</p> <p>Viewpoints PVC 1 – PVC 6 have assessed views from vantage points along the Buried Rivers of Gold Heritage Trail, and Daylesford Clunes Road, a road identified in the SWVLAS as being a potential or future tourist route.</p> <p>These views are from locations that the local Community values, and areas experienced by visitors to the region.</p> <p>The combination of these viewpoints, and others assessed in this section, provides a detailed understanding of a 500kV transmission line on towers that are up to 80m in height in this area.</p>	<p>viewpoint selection process is explained, noting that selected viewpoints include views from public lookouts, key vantage points or places of interest identified in Policy, and also through community consultation and stakeholder engagement.</p>	<p>“experience” that will occur for people travelling along a highway or road who will now drive toward the high voltage lines and towers, first seeing them from a distance, gradually approaching them and then finally passing under them. If the transmission lines and towers are constructed through Hepburn Shire as proposed, there will be numerous new instances where one would now be driving toward and then passing under them in the country landscape.</p> <p>The notion of choosing a single location on a road to illustrate the potential visual impacts of the transmission line and towers in a photomontage would, in my opinion, be insufficient in documenting the visual impacts.</p> <p>“Most major roads and local roads in this part of Hepburn Shire are either tourist routes or have the potential to develop that capacity in the future.”</p> <p>The visual impacts upon all of these journeys are important to consider as Part of a visual impact assessment.</p>	<p><i>be included individually and where the significant effects are unlikely to differ – for example, certain points may be chosen to represent the views of users of particular public footpaths and roadways.</i></p>	<p>Partially Agree</p> <p>Chris Goss</p> <p>Brendan Papworth</p> <p><i>(Partial agreement is based on the limitations of scope for Brendan and Chris)</i></p>
<p>Has Technical Report D adequately considered impacts on local communities</p>		<p>Technical Report D clearly acknowledges that the greatest impacts of the Project will be on local communities.</p> <p>Section 11.1 has considered views from the townships of Creswick, Allendale, Smeaton, Kingston and Newlyn.</p> <p>Sections 11.3 and 11.4 have assessed views from a range of locations within the Hepburn Shire that include significant and sensitive landscapes and viewing locations.</p>	<p>No concerns raised with regard to the methodology applied to the Project overall.</p> <p>The concerns relate to the granularity of the assessment applied to the northern Part of Darley..</p>	<p>No concerns raised with regard to the methodology applied to the Project overall.</p> <p>The concerns relate to the granularity of the assessment applied to Hepburn Shire.</p> <p><i>The day-to-day journeys of residents along local roads in this area, either to travel to work or to shop in larger townships, such as Creswick, are also important to acknowledge as Part of a familiar and valued visual experience of the landscape.</i></p>	<p>No concerns raised with regard to the methodology applied to the Project overall.</p> <p>The concerns relate to the granularity of the assessment applied to Melton Shire.</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Hayden Burge</p> <p>(in the context of the Projects scale and landscape)</p> <p>Partially Agree</p> <p>Steve Schutt</p> <p>Chris Goss</p> <p>Brendan Papworth</p> <p><i>(Partial agreement is based on the limitations of scope for Brendan and Chris)</i></p>
<p>Recognised tourism vantage points have been considered appropriate to the Projects Scale.</p>		<p>Technical Report D has included views from nearby townships, tourism areas that are publicly accessible, or where access was granted. This includes all townships within 9.2km of the Project, water bodies, and the Buried Rivers of Gold touring route.</p> <p>Other attractions identified in Desktop assessments were the Hedge Maze (Addressed elsewhere) and Anderson Mills (not visible).</p> <p>There were no formal cycling routes, such as rail trails or others, in the Hepburn Shire near the Project.</p> <p>Townships of Daylesford, Trentham (noted as a Top Tourism Town), Hepburn Springs and Maldon, are outside the LVIA study area. From</p>		<p>A significant shortfall in the assessment criteria for visual impact is related to tourism.</p> <p>Hepburn Shire is primarily a tourist destination in Victoria, featuring famous townships and attractions such as Daylesford, Trentham, Hepburn Springs, Maldon, and Clunes. Trentham has recently been named Australia’s Top Tourism.</p>		<p>Agree</p> <p>Hayden Burge</p> <p>Steve Schutt</p> <p>Chris Goss</p> <p>Partially Agree</p> <p>Brendan Papworth</p>

		<p>Clunes the Project is either not visible or any visual effect would be negligible.</p> <p>Impacts of Tourism are considered in the review undertaken in the Social and Economic Impact Assessments.</p>				
Assessment of Dwellings	Methodology set out in Section 4.7.1 of Technical Report D is appropriate to identify dwellings for inclusion in the assessment					All Agree
	Wind Farm Guidance is appropriate for the assessment of impacts of dwellings in rural settings.	<p>The assessment is based upon Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (Landscape Institute, 2019); and Recent Victorian Wind Farms. This is stated in Section 4.7 of Technical Report D.</p> <p>Victorian Wind Farm examples are appropriate because they provide local guidance on distance considerations, assessing impacts on dwellings in rural areas, and mitigation strategies. Example Permit conditions also support these projects, which have guided Technical Report D.</p> <p>Sensitivity of dwelling occupants in farming areas is considered to be high (Section 4.7.7). This is also the case for wind farms. Assessment criteria include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visibility ▪ distance ▪ Landscape change (transformational /additive) ▪ Duration (nature of the view) ▪ Landscape Character <p>There is no “Positive” rating in the scale of effects. Although people may find wind farms appealing. This is limited to some (few) public viewing locations and does not apply to dwellings.</p>	<p>The methodology acknowledges that viewer sensitivity in relation to private dwellings is always rated as high.</p> <p>This reflects the personal attachment which residents have to their homes and recognises that, regardless of other criteria, any change to a view enjoyed by the residents of a dwelling will be perceived as being more significant to those residents than a similar level of change to a view within the public realm experienced by a broader community.</p>	<p>There is a large difference in the aesthetic perceptions of wind turbines in the landscape compared to high voltage steel transmission towers and wires.</p> <p>Therefore, they are not appropriate for assessing the visual impact of a 500kV overhead transmission line.</p>	No Concerns Raised in relation to Technical Report D	<p>Agree</p> <p>Hayden Burge</p> <p>Partially Agree</p> <p>Steve Schutt</p> <p>Chris Goss</p> <p>Brendan Papworth</p>
<i>Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 – Matters of National Environmental Significance under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 To be considered</i>		<p>It is my understanding that a review of MNES is undertaken at the referral stage, informing the approvals pathway and, for this Project, the Scoping Requirements.</p> <p>A review of heritage values was undertaken by the lead author of the Historical Heritage Impact Assessment (HHIA). Table 6.1 (Section 6.2.1) of Technical Report C notes that there are no Commonwealth Heritage Places within the study area, nor are there places on the National or World Heritage register.</p>	Clarification sought in the Peer Review.	NA	NA	All Agree
Photomontages and Imagery	Photomontages Assist in the assessment of Landscape and Visual Impacts					All Agree

	Photomontages are NOT required for all viewpoints.					All Agree	
	Consistent presentation of photographs in the report will assist the reader.	<p>This is relevant to photomontages, which assist in interpreting the visibility, scale and prominence of the Project's towers.</p> <p>Views included at each viewpoint are provided for context. They are not a technical photomontage used to interpret the scale and prominence of features in views. For these reasons, the viewing angle, which will vary for each viewpoint, is the relevant consideration and not a consistent frame of reference.</p> <p>Enlargements which include a consistent frame of reference (in this Project 60° in the horizontal) allow for the consideration of the scale of the Project's towers over varying distances.</p> <p>My experience is that a 60 horizontal enlargement of a technically accurate photomontage printed on an A0 sheet, provides greater perceptual accuracy of the change in view.</p>	<p>The UK Landscape Institute, in its <i>Technical Guidance Note 06/19 – Visual Representation of Development Proposals</i>, which complements the <i>Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition</i> referred to in other parts of the LVIA, recommends that visualisations comprise a presented field of view of 90 degrees horizontally and 27 degrees vertically, and – where printed – should comprise an A1 sheet size.</p> <p>With regard to this LVIA, in some instances, photomontages are presented with horizontal fields of view in excess of 200 degrees, which the human eye cannot capture in a single view.</p>			<p>The relevance of imagery is enhanced by details such as the photograph's location and camera specifications, which are useful.</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Steve Schutt Chris Goss</p> <p>Partially Agree</p> <p>Hayden Burge</p> <p>No opinion</p> <p>Brendan Papworth</p>
q	Viewer Numbers are a relevant consideration for visual assessment	<p>Viewer numbers are one of several important considerations for visual impact. The representative nature of views (Road classification) and viewer numbers are important considerations in any visual assessment. This is supported by Section 6 of GLV3, specifically sections 6.3, 6.15 and 6.20.</p> <p>There are local roads in the Hepburn Shire that have higher levels of visual significance and attract potential viewers. These are assessed in Viewpoints PVC 1 - PVC 6.</p>	<p>The methodology defines a series of impact assessment criteria that consider both landscape attributes and viewer attributes, including viewer numbers. I agree with the statement in the methodology (in Section 4.6.3) that this approach is consistent with guidance provided in the <i>Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition</i>, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013).</p>	<p>The "Viewer Numbers" factor is much less relevant to the area where the proposed Route would pass through Hepburn Shire. As such, I do not agree that many of what might be defined as "local roads" in Hepburn Shire would necessarily qualify as being of less visual significance than what might be referred to as "major roads".</p>	<p><i>2.5 People Context (Visual Baseline)</i></p> <p>.....An analysis of these various receptor groups generally aims to identify the extent of potential views and the number of people affected by a proposal through a combination of Census data, visitation numbers, or receptor maps that identify specific buildings, dwellings, scenic lookouts, or main streets.</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Hayden Burge Steve Schutt Chris Goss</p> <p>Partially Agree</p> <p>Brendan Papworth</p>	
	The Scale of Effects should include a rating of Very High	<p>The scale of effects adopted for this Project is consistent with guidance provided by the GLV3 and other accepted methodologies. The scale includes two that are lower (Negligible, Low), and two that are higher (Moderate and High). No positive scales are included, as would be identified for other large-scale projects such as wind farms.</p> <p>Without a definition of a "catastrophic" impact, it is difficult to contemplate how this would apply.</p> <p>Introducing "Very High" would not add greater clarity or value to the assessment. This would be the same as a High impact that cannot be mitigated.</p>	<p>'Scale of Effects' criteria should include a 'very high' impact level.</p> <p>Such a refinement would not result in any impact levels currently assessed as moderate being elevated to high. Instead, it would separate those impacts currently assessed as high into two impact levels: high and very high.</p>	<p>The "Scale of Effects" used in the LVIA is too limited and overly simplistic, especially for a project that traverses the varied and nuanced landscapes of the Hepburn Shire.</p> <p>"Moderate" should represent the midpoint of the scale, and gradations above it should include High, Very High, and Extreme/Catastrophic.</p> <p>A single "High" category dilutes the severity of impacts and results in visually different outcomes being grouped together.</p>	<p>No Concerns Raised in relation to Technical Report D:</p> <p>Table 17 Scale of effects rating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Very High ▪ High ▪ Moderate ▪ Low ▪ Very Low ▪ Nil is excluded. 	<p>Agree</p> <p>Steve Schutt Chris Goss</p> <p>Partially Agree</p> <p>Hayden Burge (High, but cannot be mitigated) Brendan Papworth (Should include Extreme/Catastrophic)</p>	