

Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI)  
C/- Major Projects Portal

Attention: [kurtis.wathen@dpienew.gov.au](mailto:kurtis.wathen@dpienew.gov.au)

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Critical State Significant Infrastructure Hunter Transmission Project – SSI-70610456

Dear Kurtis,

I refer to your request for advice on the Hunter Transmission Project dated 22 August 2025.

Agriculture is vital in supporting state, regional, and local economies, as well as strengthening the social bonds and character of rural communities. The NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Agriculture and Biosecurity (the Department) collaborates and partners with our stakeholders to protect, support and develop primary industries and regional economies.

The Department's advice is guided by section 4.15(1) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act)*, which requires a consent authority to evaluate a project's potential environmental, social, and economic impacts as well as the public interest. Sections 1.3(a) and (b) of the *EP&A Act* emphasise facilitating ecologically sustainable development in land use decision-making and promoting responsible resource management that benefits present and future generations.

The EIS and relevant attachments have been reviewed.

The Department notes that the project scope includes the construction of a 500 kV double-circuit transmission line (approximately 110 km), two new switching stations (Bayswater South and Olney), upgrades to existing substations and transmission lines, and temporary worker accommodation (TWA) for approximately 780 workers. The TWA sites are located at Hebden Road, Gouldsville Road and Freemans Drive, construction support sites, and will be fully self-contained and compliant with NSW Housing SEPP guidelines.

The agricultural land impacted will be approximately 874 ha during construction (817 ha of dryland, 57 ha of irrigated land), with a permanent impact on 213 ha of Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL). The Land and Soil Capability (LSC) classes 3–8 are present throughout the project, with the highest quality land located near the Hunter River, where alternative routes were developed to avoid traversing the centres of these lands.

Alignment A was selected to minimise impacts on towns, national parks, tourism areas, and sensitive agricultural land, avoiding major disruption to existing 330 kV infrastructure and maximising the use of public and mining lands.

The Department notes that consultation outcomes have seen a reduction in directly affected private properties from 78 to 20, the relocation of the switching station to Olney State Forest, and adjustments made to avoid sensitive properties, cultural heritage sites, and high biodiversity areas.

Property management plans are to be developed in consultation with directly impacted properties. Similarly, biosecurity management plans will be prepared in consultation with landowners and relevant local council biosecurity officers.

Decommissioning and rehabilitation of all temporary infrastructure are to be completed post-construction. Rehabilitation plans will be developed in consultation with landowners, where disturbed areas will be returned to pre-construction condition, and documented in property management plans.

The mitigation measures proposed in the EIS are considered adequate to address the potential impacts of the project on agricultural land and associated land uses. Continued engagement with affected landowners and stakeholders will be essential to ensure the effective implementation of these measures.

Should you require clarification on any information provided, please contact Lilian Parker, A/Manager Agricultural Land Use Planning, by email at [landuse.ag@dpiird.nsw.gov.au](mailto:landuse.ag@dpiird.nsw.gov.au).

Sincerely

*L Parker*

Lilian Parker  
A/Manager, Agricultural Land Use Planning  
Agriculture & Biosecurity  
Signed 24-9-2025