

Kevin & Virginia Hawke
1615 Humula Road
TARCUTTA NSW 2650

Correspondence to: enterprisetrust1808@gmail.com

8/10/23

Director – Energy Assessments,
Development Assessment,
Department of Planning and Environment,
4 Parramatta Square,
12 Darcy Street,
Parramatta NSW 2150

Dear Sir/Madam,

**SUBMISSION IN RESPONSE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT OF THE
HUMELINK PROJECT – APPLICATION NO SSI-36656827**

I/we hereby submit this response to the HumeLink Environmental Impact Statement report.

We object to the HumeLink proposal on a number of grounds, as follows:

- **EMOTIONAL**

Every time we go outside we will be looking at the ugly towers and possibly hearing the corona hum.

Apart from the economic considerations, we have the emotional toll this project is taking on us. . We are elderly and have been extremely upset and developed **illnesses that may relate to the endured stress of dealing with Transgrid** and the thought of power lines on our farm.

- **DANGEROUS CORONA DISCHARGE & PHYSICAL DANGERS**

We have concerns about ongoing corona discharge and **(electromagnetic frequencies)** being potentially dangerous to ourselves and our livestock.

- **BUSHFIRES & OUTAGES**

HumeLink towers will make fire-prone southern NSW even more susceptible to devastating bushfires. **We live in close proximity to the proposed towers, on Humula Road, Tarcutta and we are terrified of the bushfire risk.**

The problem with overhead powerlines isn't restricted to the increased threat of starting fires, but the impediment they present in fighting fires. High Voltage powerlines effectively stop the management of bushfires in the vicinity because the space over and under powerlines are no go zones for firefighters. For some landowners who have lower voltage transmission lines on their properties already lost significant parts of their property during the Black Summer bushfires of 2020 as a result of not being able to fight the fires

Underground energy transmission is more reliable, safe and efficient and will not be impacted by outages during extreme weather, or increase the risk of catastrophic bushfire.

Transgrid's insistence on building the foundation for our State's renewable future on dangerous 19th century technology instead of undergrounding, ignores the fact that electrical distribution networks are one of the primary sources of major bushfires. [When weather conditions elevate fire risk, up to 50% of major fires are ignited by faults in distribution networks.](#)

If the project goes ahead in its current form, it is highly likely that lives will be lost, properties devastated and countless threatened and endangered wildlife scarified as a direct result of this project over its 80 – 100 year lifespan. These risks will increase dramatically with global warming as has already been seen over recent years.

The cost of bushfires is significant. Deloitte Access Economics put the tangible and intangible costs of the Victoria Black Saturday bush fires at \$7.6 billion. By extrapolation, the cost of the 2019-20 Australian bush fire season, 'Black Summer', has been estimated at \$230 billion.

In the US in 2019, to escape the billions of dollars from claims of fire victims, energy company PG&E started undergrounding and has implemented a plan to bury 10,000 miles of power lines and equipment in areas with high fire risk. PG&E's modelling shows burying lines reduces their risk of igniting wildfires by approximately 99 percent.

- **FINANCIAL**

We have numerous towers proposed for our farm and our daughter is less than 2KM from the proposed power lines as well. We have been offered compensation which does not opinion represent the property value loss and we would prefer the powerlines to go underground than the money offered. Our daughters farm has view of the ugly power lines and I have not been offered any compensation.

Management issues are also concerning with the powerlines, inability to conduct pasture management around the structures.

- **ECONOMICALLY IRRISPONSIBLE**

In fact, the current proposal for HumeLink, which will be the State's most expensive energy project ever, is a \$4billion economic disaster for regional NSW that fails to assess its impact on key regional industries such as tourism and agriculture.

Compared to undergrounding, the outdated tower technology proposed for HumeLink are prone to outages and blackouts, requires regular and ongoing maintenance to remain safe, and significantly increases the risk of bushfire in the community.

The only ones benefiting from Transgrid's proposed 360 kilometre high-voltage overhead transmission lines appear to be its foreign corporate owners who will see a 40% jump in revenue, according to Victoria Energy Policy Centre, Victoria University.

Humelink's costings also do not properly consider ongoing maintenance of towers to keep them safe over the 80-10 year life of the project, but instead focus only on upfront build costs. Maintenance costs would be significantly reduced by undergrounding.

- **ENVIRONMENTAL**

In its current form, the HumeLink Tower proposal will devastate habitats for more than 80 threatened or endangered species of flora and fauna, while undergrounding provides a far less destructive alternative at marginal extra cost.

The HumeLink towers project will impact an area of 5713 hectares of land (based on Transgrid's referral to the EPBC Act), including clear-felling areas of native forests and bushland with serious impacts on habitat, greenhouse gases and global warming.

Transmission towers will also increase the risk of bushfire, as highlighted in several recent bushfire inquiries, which could have devastating impacts on wildlife populations, and create large quantities of greenhouse gases.

Transmission towers are inefficient compared to undergrounding in that they waste precious renewable energy supplies through leakage. [The AEMO says that as electricity flows through the transmission and distribution networks, energy is lost due to electrical resistance and the heating of conductors. The losses are equivalent to approximately 10% of the total electricity transported.](#)

Our farm has had recent sightings of the threatened and susceptible species including the Squirrel Gliders, Dusky Woodswallow and Scarlet Robin. We also have black swans who are very susceptible to colliding with the powerlines. Plus we have remnant native flora. We have been involved in restoring habitat and protecting these animals so apart from the human risk we are very concerned about the flora and fauna.

Please consider the longer term cost of these overhead lines and please put them underground for the sake of our future generations.

Yours faithfully

Virginia Hawke

Kevin & Virginia Hawke

