

Harold Lucas
Co-principle - Reiland Angus
Killimicat 2720 NSW

Director – Energy Assessments,
Development Assessment,
Department of Planning and Environment,
4 Parramatta Square,
12 Darcy Street,
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Dear Sir/Madam,

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

We hereby submit this response to the HumeLink Environmental Impact Statement report.

We object to the HumeLink proposal on several grounds, but first I would like to give you a quick overview of our concerns and these have not been able to be answered by Transgrid. We have read parts of the EIS – but for a farmer – currently experiencing possible drought, and the market drops and only help but from family members- we can't dissect the EIS and give the professionalism that would be required – as Transgrid are forcing this project on us.

Date: 10/10/23

Reiland Angus is a 3rd generation farming family breeding registered Angus cattle for the past 30 + years. The property is now over 1000ha in size, running both cattle, sheep and producing crops for livestock fodder.

Killimicat Station is set to have close to 4km and potentially 13 towers up to 80m high with 500kV lines run directly through the middle of the property as well as constructing close to 6km of access tracks, scarring the landscape even more, they will completely dominate the landscape. This is a part of the HumeLink project that is a 360 km, 500kV transmission line that extends from Bannaby in the Southern Tablelands to Maragle near Kosciusko National Park, and to Wagga Wagga. It is described by Transgrid as the “largest capital project since construction of our existing network”.

Eurabbie is also affected on another location on the Brungle Creek Road – which will be paralleling 300kV existing line.

These towers are the bulkiest and tallest and will absolutely desecrate the landscape which will impose enormous costs to our farm, the environment and our community.

The details below briefly outline our major concerns.

1. Cultural & heritage concerns- Chapter 9

We are on a boundary with Mudjarn Nature reserve, the reserve is also known locally as “Pine Mountain” due the locally abundant Black Cypress Pine (*Callitris endlicherii*), which

gives the reserve a very dark appearance and makes it stand out from other high points in the area.

Mudjarn Nature Reserve protects areas of remnant native forest, including small pockets of Yellow Box and Red Gum woodland, a component of the endangered White Box - Yellow Box - Blakely's Red Gum woodland community. Nine species of mammal, four frogs, seven reptiles and 153 species of bird have been recorded in the reserve, including six threatened bird species.

Mudjarn Nature Reserve also protects Aboriginal cultural heritage sites, landscapes and other features that have high significance to the local Aboriginal community. Whereas the valleys were a focus for living, the high peaks and hills are associated with ritual. Initiations are known to have occurred within the ranges and hills until the 1920s.⁽¹⁾

The towers are proposed to be a mere 20-50 m from the boundary of this significant area. The NSW government need to be protecting areas with such significance from extra fire risk, placing towers this close is a huge risk and moving away or undergrounding needs considering.

(1) NSW Dept of Planning & Environment - <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/park-management/documents/mudjarn-nature-reserve>

HumeLink Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report EIS Technical Report 2 Page 237/432

10.1.2 Mudjarn Nature Reserve Mudjarn Nature Reserve is an Aboriginal place about 300 metres from the project. Mudjarn is associated with significant ceremonial sites, burials and a source of natural materials to manufacture traditional weapons and tools. It is the dwelling place of the spirit being Dulargul. Mudjarn represents the long-term occupation of the Wiradjuri, Ngunnawal and Walgalu of the Tumut River Valley. The distance of Mudjarn Nature Reserve from the project footprint means that the indirect visual impact to the significance of this site is assessed to be negligible.

HumeLink Historic Heritage Impact Assessment EIS Technical Report 3

Page 55 - Killimicat was the site of a timber beam bridge across the Tumut River, constructed in 1897, as well as a quarry.¹³⁴ In 2016 it had a population of 29, engaged primarily in grazing.¹³⁵

Figure 5-16 The Pine Mountain from Killimicat Hill on road from Tumut to Gundagai, sunset, 1881¹³⁶

I have read some parts of the reports and it is wonderful but the word negligible and indirect visual impact when the project is a mere 300metres and the towers are up to 75m tall the visual impact will be seen from the nature reserve, Pine Mountain and from the Brungle Road where we have many people stop to take picture and view the Nature Reserve. The area of amazing cultural and heritage significance. This is where the amenity and the visual changes happen, is expected to seriously impact the heritage significant of these places.

2. **Non- Aboriginal Heritage Chapter 10.** – 10.6.3 and the mitigation measure- how can they Transgrid tell us that a tree that could be hundreds of years old isn't a Non Aboriginal Heritage Item. Once it is knocked down. Its gone and so is the heritage. We are family farmer and we plan to live and work here for the next 100+ years – longer than the towers the proposed HumeLink project.

3. Biosecurity Risk – Chapter 19

The risks are a huge problem for our property and business if the towers are erected or buried, and considerations need to be taking into how the government will manage a huge outbreak of disease,

i.e. undergrounding or constructing towers can be followed on existing easements like roads and highways to alleviate the possibility of a major biosecurity outbreak on private farms across the project.

4. Bushfire Risk –

Above Ground Powerlines –

- The risk of a large fire burning adjacent to or under high voltage power lines has the potential to create electrical arcs (or flashovers) that can endanger people, animals and objects which we run livestock and live.
- It is advised that you cannot go under power lines if the smoke is thick - as all members of my family are active RFS members we have the risk of not being able to travel to the fire shed to collect the fire truck or go directly to the fire safely with a personal fire unit on farm vehicle.
- We will be unable to move stock to safe grounds as the power lines will be a no go zone during a fire. We take the animal welfare of animals very seriously and not being able to move them to safe ground is hard for us to fathom.

Undergrounding the powerlines –

- the risk of arcs and any dangers are alleviated with undergrounding, all staff and RFS members will be free to move around on the property via road or paddock and not have to stay away from the excluded area when the fire is near the underground corridor and have the ability to move stock to safe grounds.

5. Aerial spraying & fertiliser application –

Humelink is removing biodiversity (natural) assets of farmers which could otherwise allow farmers to market their produce as sustainable.

Humelink will restrict: the use machinery higher than 4.3m; spray irrigation, aerial operations (spraying/fertilising), drones, precision agriculture. It also poses significant and enduring biosecurity risks. With a smaller easement and less on going clearing, undergrounding is less of a biosecurity risk.

Above Ground Powerlines –

- Aerial spraying & fertiliser application will be hugely impacted as the majority of the proposed corridor is very steep terrain and has low vehicle access on the corridor - aerial application is the only way to apply the fertiliser. - it has been indicated that aerial contractors won't want to get as close as 800m either side of the towers so it could ultimately leave 608 ha of land not being about to have aerial application at correct dosages. (3800m x 1600m = 608ha)

Undergrounding the powerlines –

- We will be able to conduct this as allowing us to maintain the current productivity via Aerial applications.
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6. Construction Disruptions –

Above Ground Powerlines

- livestock disruptions during construction will be an issue as Killimicat has many paddock and gates. We run a stud stock operation and we aim to ensure cattle are not disrupted at calving;- to ensure that they mother up correctly and when joining no cattle are accidentally moved when gates are open, as we record which bull goes with each cow to ensure our breeding objectives are met to produce calves for the correct EBV's to meet customer demands.

Undergrounding the powerlines –

- We understand that similar amount of traffic will go throughout the property and all concerns are the same as above ground.

7. Maintenance disruptions –

Similar to the construction but the overhead inspections from low flying aircraft will be a huge risk of livestock running and mismothering from their mothers which can lead management problems with the stud stock and also the chance of malnutrition or even death if they lose their mother and are with out milk for a long period of time. Also the chance of livestock spooking and getting caught up in fences

8. Soil Disruptions –

This is in regard to the slab construction for the towers and access roads for both above and undergrounding,

- Transgrid have proposed that the 4-5 cm of fertile topsoil will be set aside for later topsoiling (we are unsure how the fragile slate loam soil can be removed and put back months or even years later) leaving the property in a state it was prior to construction on both pads and access tracks.

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9. Vegetation Loss –

There is potentially going to be significant destruction of upward of 180 trees and also shrubs on our properties.

All trees on Killimicat are Past clearing of Killimicat Station has strategically left the trees (5 species) across the steep ridges not only for prevention of erosion but also livestock shelter, landscape stability and overall birdlife ecology.

The difference between above and under grounding the transmission lines in relation to trees will be significantly different as the easement for undergrounding is smaller.

10. Visual Amenity –

the property has been described as some of the most picturesque country in the district. The national park on the boundary is amazing. We would on average see one person a week and stop and take pictures of the valley and have had many artists paint the valley and national park. I can't go on about this as it is very hard to see, (I would like to invite you to come and look if you are in the area) The visual impact on the farming property as a whole needs to be assessed – the farm as a whole is where you work and live. – not just the dwelling – we live and work here.



11. Health Issues –

We have many questions and unanswered questions in regards to the exposure to ELF EMF and risks of things like Cancer and childhood leukaemia. www.arpana.gov.au

The Audible noise is expected of 500 kV overhead lines may produce audible noise of up to 45 dB for a person standing 15 m away from the overhead line (closest phase of the circuit).

We will be working under these powerlines everyday, multiply times a day. My family and the employees could potentially be under them upwards of 20 times on any set day.

There is no (or negligible) audible noise for underground lines. Overhead lines emit audible noise whereas underground cables do not (or negligible).

12. **Landowner Stress** - the mental health of these powerlines being thrown at us is huge. The extra workload for farmers to implement a PMP (property management plan) is huge at a cost to the business or just in a person's personal time. The landowners are not offered anything until the first compensation payment and SBP scheme payment is not adequate. In our case Jessie has put many hours into this, taking time from her family and imposing extra stress. As for the landowners - who are acquiring the assets of the Transgrid and the government it is awful. All the hours of looking after the land is worth nothing when it can be ruined right in front of their eyes. Desecrated with towers at the drop of a hat without taking into consideration of going underground and doing the job correctly the first time

Employee Stress - We as a business employee people to work here at Killimicat. This is their work place and the thought of having to work under these powerlines is an item of concern for them.

13. Farm Insurance/ Business disruptions –

- We have been told that some farmers proposed transmission routes are being told by insurance brokers that farm insurance will be unaffordable or unavailable due to the increased fire risk associated with overhead transmission. Fire risk is becoming too hot to handle for insurance companies. We are unable to get a clear directive from our current insurer will have to ensure that our bushfire policy will be covered once the transmission lines are put up. Undergrounding won't have this issue.
- The business disruptions are going to be huge for us, and I don't want to get into this, we won't know the outcomes till after the fact. We have read articles that from France that livestock produce less milk, (less milk in a calf+ less weight gain = less money at sale/slaughter) [example of compensation in France](#).

I have other objections – but not the time to discuss and lose more sleep over.
I would be willing to discuss if needed-

- I acknowledge and accept the Department of Planning and Environment's disclaimer and declaration.
- Declaration of political donations: No.

Yours sincerely,

Harold Lucas (Harry)