

Cassilis Citizen

04.11.2023

Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone
c/- Energy Co
155 Macquarie St
Dubbo, NSW 2329

Submission in the response to the Energy Co EIS (SS1-48323210)

I am a mother, a corporate professional and a private business owner. I am citizen of Cassilis, NSW 2329.

I have serious concerns with the impacts of the transmission project on the Cassilis community and area. These are not adequately addressed in the EIS.

In the interests of brevity, my key concerns are summarized below:

1. Specifically regarding the proposed Neeley's Lane, Cassilis TWA

Community consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This has been inexistent. No information sessions have been held in Cassilis regarding the TWA and information regarding the site has not been proactively disseminated by EnergyCo.• The extensive nature of the EIS and appendices means that critical details involving the village have been extremely hard to identify, even with extensive personal reading. This means the issues are poorly known through the general community.• Inadequate effective community consultation means EIS responses are the ONLY way for our impacted community to submit feedback. I feel violated and shocked. EnergyCo presumes the time availability of a private individual to allocate sufficient time resources beyond private and professional commitments to evaluate over 1000 pages of EIS plus its supporting technical papers (and no reimbursement on professional time). Or rather, EnergyCo impedes community feedback by making it near impossible.
Road safety within the village	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The traffic management plan highlighted through Ancrum street will funnel HIGH volumes of traffic (56 vehicles per hour – 1 vehicle per minute) through residential housing, directly past the primary school and over a single lane shared pedestrian bridge. In what world can this be considered safe or viable?

<p>Safety on local roads and the Golden Highway</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Golden Highway already has high accident and fatality counts. There is a single over-taking lane between Dunnedoo and Merriwa. Mine traffic is high. Drivers are already impatient and the highway is dangerous. • This issue is critical to all users. It is foremost in my mind, repeatedly travelling the highway daily with an ambulatory service business, and ferrying young children to care and school. • The EIS CATEGORICALLY DOES NOT address this issue. While upgrade plans are stated, no details are provided on material changes to address safety (turning lanes, over-taking lanes, wide-load waiting bays). Supposed 'upgrades' filling rough surfaces and re-clearing the verge as currently being completed, are merely maintenance works that has not been adequality kept-up already. • Further, locations of the heavy vehicle counting equipment around the Ulan Rd have under-rated existing mine traffic and how busy the highway already is. Is this professional inadequacy or deliberate manipulation? • Finally, local roads that will be utilised by Energy Co stakeholders (whether in their official traffic management plan or simply 'logically' by their many contractors and suppliers (eg: Coolah Rd) MUST be widened and sealed to maintain user safety. 'Upgrades' of grading alone are grossly inadequate. As an example, a recent highway closure that led to a detour of some light traffic through the Coolah Rd had to be immediately stopped due to multiple near misses in the dust and rough gravel. Given no detail of sealing roads like this has been provided, we have to assume EneryCo has not planned for it.
<p>Social impacts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Neeleys Lane TWA represents 800 additional users of a 100 person village. This is overwhelming to a small community celebrated for its remote aesthetic and lifestyle. The two licensed premises and hubs for community social interaction will be overwhelmed. I am certain they will be patronized by FIFO workers given there is no other hospitality option for >45km in any direction. • There is significant published research into the degradation of community cohesion due to TWAs and the anti-social behavior of FIFO workers. This TWA will completely change the social fiber of our community. • As a mother with small children the proposed TWA makes me feel unsafe and ill at ease. This impact was diminished as 'perceived' in the EIS. How is that ok?

I categorically do not believe a TWA should be permitted to be within 30km of a small and isolated village that lacks the ammenity to provide or gain any positive outcome. This precedence needs to be set to protect small communities effected by REZ zones into the future.

2. The transmission project in general

Agricultural impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The EIS grossly underrates the economic and social contribution farming businesses make to the local and national community.• BSAL land importance is grossly under-rated compared to other land classes, yet the Cassilis Plateau is of strategic state primary production importance.• The impact of the line on agricultural productivity is therefore undervalued and inadequately mitigated.
Safety on local roads and the Golden Highway	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As detailed above, but exponentiated with the heavy vehicle and wide load requirement of the transmission line construction itself.
Bushfire control	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No plan for legacy bushfire fighting equipment and assistance is given beyond the construction of the project. Are local volunteers expected to cover this increased risk?• No detail is provided regarding aerial fire-fighting safety and the transmission line.

In summary, to adequately reduce the environmental impacts of the transmission project, Energy Co must:

- A. Move the proposed Neeley's Lane camp further away from Cassilis village
- B. Address critical safety deficiencies on local roads and the Golden Highway that are endangering lives
- C. Increase the value placed on agricultural production across the project so impacts can be accurately identified addressed

I look forward to proactive community consultation on points A-C.