

Sam & Meg Piper
77 Kruilaya Rd
Cassilis, NSW 2329
E: sampiper2@gmail.com

28th October 2023

Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone
c/- EnergyCo
155 Macquarie St
Dubbo NSW 2830

Submission to the Central-West Orana REZ Transmission EIS (SS1-48323210)

We are making this submission as we object to the Central-West Orana REZ Transmission Project. We have been in the Cassilis district our entire lives, raising our family & operating various farming businesses. The proposed project will have detrimental impacts on our community, resources, agricultural land & environment. After reading the EIS, it is obvious that consultation has been very poor & the current proposal is a lose-lose scenario for the Cassilis community. Our concerns are outlined below.

1. Why haven't we been informed of the project?

Given it is set to have SIGNIFICANT impacts on our region, shouldn't there be some information available for us to consider? To date, we have not received a single piece of information regarding what is happening. We are not the only ones, most people we talk to are unaware of what EnergyCo is proposing. How can the EIS state that the community has been effectively consulted if no-one knows about it?

2. Impacts on neighbours

Large transmission lines & the proposed Temporary Workforce Accommodation at Neelys Lane will be neighbouring us. This greatly reduces the value of our land & therefore impacts the success of our business. EnergyCo has ignored this implication & hasn't provided us with a single piece of information regarding their plans. This makes financial planning difficult. Having a TWA located on Neelys Lane will also make it challenging for us to run our business, as we will now have to share the normally quiet lane with 800 other people. We currently use the lane to move large numbers of livestock

& farm machinery between farms. Again, EnergyCo has not discussed this or any potential mitigation options with us. The risk of noxious weeds spreading on to our farm is also increased, given the extra vehicles travelling via the laneway. Again, no mitigation options have been suggested.

3. Impacts on agriculture

- a. The EIS has underestimated the economic & social contribution that farming businesses make to the local & national economy. As a result, the impact of the transmission lines has been mis-calculated.
- b. The surveying of local farm businesses has been severely inadequate, with only seven farmers asked across the whole region.
- c. The poor consultation & lack of transparent planning has left many farmers unsure about how & to what extent their farms & business will be impacted.
- d. The EIS does not include any details on how the movement of agricultural commodities will be impacted. The Golden Highway is the main route for moving grain from the west to Newcastle port & then fertiliser back inland. The additional traffic will make this route more congested, especially given the number of OSOM vehicle predicted. The EIS does not include any details of how this specific inconvenience will be dealt with.
- e. EnergyCo will be purchasing large areas of land to off-set the environmental damage they are doing for this project. This has a negative impact on local communities, as family farms are bought out & people move away from the district. It also takes land out of agricultural production. This off-set country is also notorious for harbouring pests & weeds. None of these issues are mentioned in the EIS.
- f. Farming business are professional, just like any other industry, however many protocols outlined in the EIS indicate that EnergyCo does not understand this.
- g. There is no clear plan on how chemical use in easement areas will be documented to ensure that farm biosecurity & safety guidelines are met.
- h. This EnergyCo project will significantly increase the risk of bushfires in our area. In the EIS there is no mention of any compensation for landholders (direct or neighbouring) who may be burnt out as a result of a fire started by EnergyCo's associated activities.

4. Impacts on local residents

We, like many others, choose to live in the Cassilis area because we value its agricultural production, visual amenity, peace & quiet. Everything that EnergyCo has proposed will deduct from this. What value is being placed on local residents' sense of place?

5. Traffic

- a. Why haven't we been informed about the large increases in traffic? The first information we've found is in the EIS. The traffic plans are directing vehicles

through the Cassilis village, obviously no-one has been consulted about this as it presents a multitude of safety issues. This includes the lack of foot paths, no foot bridge & the school zone at the school being overlooked.

- b. The assumption that the Golden Highway is going to be minimally impacted is false. The cumulative impacts of multiple projects in the region aren't being considered. The EIS also doesn't take into account that the Golden Highway is already busy with mining traffic & a lot of OSOM vehicles every day. The EIS also doesn't contain any detailed plans for road maintenance & repair.

6. Social impacts

- a. EnergyCo hasn't considered the demographic of our community. Given we haven't seen a single piece of printed information to date, it seems all information has to be accessed online. This isn't possible for many older residents. As a result, they don't get to have a say. This demonstrates social injustice on EnergyCo's behalf.
- b. EnergyCo has not acknowledged the huge amount of professional & personal time that individuals have had to volunteer to evaluate this EIS. It is a large document & giving it due consideration, in a tight time frame, makes it near impossible for people to provide effective feedback. This is not fair or equitable.
- c. Community Enhancement Funds are not sufficient. The majority of residents will be receiving no financial benefit from the project, yet will be faced with transmission lines across the landscape, TWA's & a negative impact on our local roads. The compensation needs to be higher.

As residents of the Cassilis community for 65 years, the prosperity, health & success of our district is very important to us. The lack of engagement & effective consultation by EnergyCo demonstrates their disregard for our community. This project will have detrimental, negative impacts for all of us – our residents, our families & our businesses.

Sincerely,



Margaret Piper

Sam & Meg Piper
