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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)**

I am a resident & business owner in the community of Cassilis, NSW. I have a number of concerns about the proposed EnergyCo project in our area. There has been basically NO community consultation for the project. Outlined below are my concerns.

<b>Community consultation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EnergyCo has not provided effective communication with our community regarding the project. There has been no mention of the proposed TWA at Neelys Lane to the Cassilis community, despite it being only 13km from town. There has been zero consultation with neighbouring residents who will be severely impacted by the proposed TWA &amp; transmission lines. TWA's can have a severe impact on community cohesion &amp; our community deserves to know what is happening. Why hasn't any information been shared? How have they properly assessed the impacts of this project? And how have they included our concerns into their planning?</li><li>• The EIS doesn't mention any mitigation measures on how a small community can cope with a temporary increase of 1400% in their population. This needs to be addressed.</li><li>• The Cassilis community has not been informed about the HUGE increases in traffic the village is going to experience. The EIS also doesn't include details on how the lack of footpaths &amp; no pedestrian bridge will be addressed to ensure the safety of our students &amp; residents is maintained.</li><li>• There has been no consideration for the aesthetic beauty of the natural landscape that the community is attached to. Most community members seem unsure about the visual impact of the project. There have been no visual displays for Cassilis residents &amp; many members lack the skills to find the photo montages online.</li><li>• The EIS confirms that surveys of local stakeholders has also been severely inadequate. Asking ONLY three Cassilis community members &amp;</li></ul>
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	<p>seven farmers across the WHOLE transmission area is not acceptable or accurate. It also does not comply with SEARS requirements.</p>
<b>Social impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EnergyCo has not acknowledged the huge amount of professional &amp; personal time that individuals have had to volunteer to evaluate this EIS. It is a large document to process &amp; give consideration, in a tight time frame. It makes it near impossible for some and impossible for others to provide effective feedback. Where is the equity in this?</li> <li>• All information has to be accessed online, which isn't possible for many residents. As a result, they don't get to have a say. This demonstrates social injustice on EnergyCo's behalf.</li> <li>• The majority of residents will be receiving no financial benefit from the project, yet will be faced with TWA's, transmission lines across the landscape &amp; a negative impact on our local roads. Community Enhancement Funds need to be significantly higher in order to generate some sort of benefit for everyone else. They also need to be controlled by local community groups, not local councils, as they will be lost in administration costs or redirected.</li> <li>• The mental health of local community members has not been considered. The poor consultation, lack of transparent planning and damage to the landscape has left many worrying about how &amp; to what extent their lives, businesses &amp; homes will be impacted.</li> </ul>
<b>Safety &amp; Traffic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Traffic Management Plan directs large volumes of traffic through the Cassilis township, but the EIS does not include any mitigation plans to ensure the safety of residents eg. Installing footpaths or a foot bridge. Many of the roads outlined are single lane &amp; gravel which are very much unsuited to this increased amount of traffic. It takes all the associated traffic straight past the local school which has no pedestrian crossing or turning bays for vehicles to enter/exit the school.</li> <li>• The assumption that the Golden Highway is going to be minimally impacted is <b>false</b>. The cumulative impacts of multiple projects in the region aren't being considered. The traffic counts done by EnergyCo are inaccurate! Traffic between Merriwa &amp; Ulan Rd intersection have not been measured or information not included. There is significant mine traffic within this stretch of road already. There are also no overtaking lanes for traffic to pass OSOM vehicles. There is no doubt traffic levels on the highway will be significantly higher &amp; the road degradation will increase at a rapid rate. There are no solid plans in the EIS that outline what the road maintenance &amp; upgrade plans are going to be.</li> </ul>
<b>Agricultural Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EIS grossly underestimates the economic &amp; social contribution that farm businesses make to the local &amp; national economy. The EIS also under-rates the importance of BSAL land, especially given the Cassilis Plateau is of strategic state primary production importance. These inaccuracies mean the impact of the transmission line is underestimated &amp; inadequately mitigated.</li> <li>• The cumulative impacts on the agricultural industry are not being addressed appropriately. The total amount of land being removed from food production is significant, especially when the cumulative amount is considered across all REZ's. Add to this the total land for "off sets" being removed from agricultural production.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research, conclusions &amp; plans for the agricultural section of the EIS are out of touch &amp; inaccurate. It seems farming business are not being considered in a professional light. Basic information regarding weed control, chemical use, visitor protocols, biosecurity &amp; production levels are inaccurate in the EIS. As a farmer for over 20 years, I know first-hand that the details regarding compliance are not correct. Mitigation options included in the EIS also lack practicality.</li> <li>• Transmission lines &amp; TWA sites will reduce the value of neighbouring farms. This has not been considered in the EIS and hence no mitigation measures have been mentioned. Why should neighbours have the negative financial, visual impact of this infrastructure &amp; the inconvenience of all aspects of the project placed on them with no compensation put forward, financial or otherwise.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EIS states that 9,859 hectares of native vegetation will be cleared in the CWOREZ. This is significant. Destroying land of environmental value to produce renewable energy does not make sense. Both locals &amp; other Australians alike, value the natural capital of this area.</li> <li>• The loss of biodiversity has been downplayed. The figures quoted for field work are incorrect, hence the impacts on biodiversity are understated.</li> </ul>
<b>Bushfires</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This EnergyCo project will significantly increase the risk of bushfires in our area. The dangerous nature of powerlines, on hot, windy summer days, is not explored in the EIS. They significantly increase the fire risk in the area, yet no mitigation measures are mentioned. Are the local RFS volunteers going to have to deal with this?</li> <li>• EnergyCo does not mention any compensation for landholders (direct or neighbouring) who may be burnt out as a result of a fire started by EnergyCo. Because EnergyCo is increasing the risk, shouldn't they also be prepared to provide adequate compensation.</li> </ul>

Basically every aspect of the EIS demonstrates EnergyCo's lack of consultation with the community. The lack of care for this region, its people and the environment means this project is a lose-lose situation, driven by greed.

Sincerely,



**Matthew Cherry**