

23 September 2025

Ms Nicole Brewer
The Director - Energy Assessment
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Dear Ms Brewer,

Ralph and Karen Northey
Hunter Transmission Project (SSI-70610456) Submission

We object to the project in its current form as the proposed alignment through the Singleton Military Area (Figure 3.9, Western option) is the one that impacts the community the most as evident in Table 3.10 of the EIS Main Text (Page 96). It is clear that the Eastern option shown in Figure 3.9 has acceptable impacts on the community with substantially less visual, noise, Built heritage and traffic impacts. It is only the Department of Defence's unsubstantiated view that has led to the selection of the Western option.

We have been informed by EnergyCo that the Department of Defence has selected the Western option based on operational requirements with no further information of justification provided. We acknowledge the importance and value of the Singleton Military Training Area, but do not understand how the Eastern option adversely impacts on Defence operational requirements sufficiently to justify the impact the Western option has on our community that has a 200 year heritage.

We do not believe that the Eastern option would unduly impact on Defences operational requirement:-

How many days a year are training exercises conducted in the Singleton Military Training Area Sector 5? People live on their properties around Oakley Lane every day of the year.

Who are the people using Sector 5? It is our understanding that there is no live firing south of Broke Road in Sector 5 and that the predominant use is by school Cadets (in sector 5 today) and Reservists. Informal conversation with Defence personal indicated that they were concerned about the electric and magnetic field (EMF) impact which we don't accept as valid given the low level of EMF generated and short periods of exposure. An assessment of the EMF impacts on the Eastern option would conclude inconsequential impact.

Repeated requests to EnergyCo to provide us and the community an opportunity to consult with Defence about the alignment were ignored. **We again request that the community be provided the opportunity to meet with the Department of Defence so they can explain how the Eastern option adversely impacts their operations sufficiently to ignore the impacts on the community.**

Defence cannot just hide behind "impacts on operational requirements" as the justification for selecting the worst impact option.

The Western option will substantially impact on property visual and nose amenity and have a real impact on the value of the properties along Oakley Lane and adjacent Cessnock Road. How will we be compensated for the substantial disturbance associated with the construction and operation of the HTP? Who will compensate us for the reduce value of our properties?

We are not looking for compensation, we just want the HTP to be constructed on the Eastern option alignment or a variation of it.

The attached Figure 1 shows a slight variation of the Eastern option that would have substantially less visual amenity impact, no impact on historic heritage, less impact on endangered ecological communities, substantially less traffic impact during construction and operations and negligible noise impact. The revised Eastern option included in Figure 1 is also about 600m shorter than the proposed Western option which would be a substantial saving from a construction and operational maintenance perspective.

The Eastern Option also avoids the wetland associated with Monkey Place Creek which is crossed by the Western Option. As identified in Section 8.3.6 the proposed access tracks for the Western option cross the Monkey Place Creek Wetland that provide habitat for the Southern Purple Spotted Gudgeon. The Eastern option completely avoids Monkey Place Creek.

We request that the revised Eastern option presented in Figure 1 be assessed and communicated to Defence as a desirable option.

Visual Impact

The Western option has substantial visual amenity impact on the local community while the Eastern option has totally acceptable visual amenity impacts.

The visual impact of the HTP has only been assessed from a single vantage point adjacent to the impacted residences. This is not a true representation of the visual impact on a rural property whose access, and lands are fully exposed to the views of the towering 500kV transmission lines and towers. EnergyCo know this and just choose to ignore it. **Would having 500kV powerlines in near vicinity of a property add or detract from the appeal? Pretty simple answer.**

Noise impacts

The Western option is predicted to generate 31 dB of static crackling noise at our residence during wet weather that is predicted to occur for 24% of the time according to EnergyCo noise consultant. The ambient nighttime noise levels in our areas are very low (often around 20-23 dB) which means 31 dB of static crackly noise will often be very audible and annoying. The other nearby properties and residence would suffer similar noise impacts. The Eastern option being about 1.5km further away would almost always be inaudible.

Historic heritage impact

Oakley Homestead is identified as having State significance and Commonwealth GEMS High heritage value, yet Defence and EnergyCo see fit to locate the HTP only 45m away from it. The Eastern option of course would have no impact on it. Interesting to see Defence has only just recently seen fit to demolish the hayshed, yet again showing their disregard for the community and heritage impacts. The Western option should have at least been on the east side of Oakley Homestead so that it to some extent could maintain its connection with the broader community fabric.

Traffic and Construction impact

Clearly construction of the Western option has substantial impact on the properties adjoining Oakley Lane and for an extended period of time with the construction within this area estimated to take in the order of 18 months according to EnergyCo James Cahill. Has there ever been a Government project that was completed on time?

The intention to use Oakley Lane for construction access was not communicated with us until the last consultation 1 week prior to the submission deadline. We were surprised and concerned to hear the volume of traffic expected on Oakley Lane during construction and even further surprised to read there will be an out of hours stringing station at the end of Oakley Lane – a detail located in Attachment B of Technical Report 8. This detail was omitted from any communication with us and are concerned about the noise generated from the stringing station and the traffic along Oakley Lane out of hours.

Oakley Lane is often used to move cattle from one paddock to another. We and a number of other local people use Oakley Lane as a quiet place to run and or exercise our dogs. There is regularly tourists parked on Oakley Lane enjoying the view or having Wedding photos taken.

Oakley Lane is a single lane road that is predominantly gravel, the level of construction traffic predicted is totally at odds with its character and capacity.

Obviously, the construction of the Eastern option would have negligible impacts on Oakley Lane and associated properties. How many days a year are training exercises conducted in the Singleton Military Training Area Sector 5?

For all these reasons we cannot understand how the Western option could be selected over the Eastern option within the Singleton Military Training Area and see it as the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructures responsibility to reject this section of the HTP in preference for the revised Eastern option we have presented.

As much as we may be the only Broke submission, we are sure our submission will be supported by our local community. Expecting our local community to consume the details of this EIS without adequate consultation and explanation of the project impacts will have on our community is a failing of EnergyCo's community engagement. If we had not asked about the noise impacts, we would not have been informed about them.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R Northey' followed by a flourish.

Ralph and Karen Northey
36 Oakley Lane Broke

Figure 1. Revised Eastern option with reduced impacts

