



24th September 2025

Kurtis Wathen
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Dear Kurtis,

Hunter Transmission Project (SSI-70610456) Submission

We refer to the critical State significant infrastructure application (SSI-70610456), environmental impact statement (**EIS**) and accompanying documents for the proposed Hunter Transmission Project (HTP), placed on public exhibition on 27 August until 24 September 2025, which intersects with the Hunter Valley Operations (**HVO**) mining complex.

Hunter Valley Operations

HVO is an established multi-pit open cut coal mining complex, comprising two mine sites separated by the Hunter River, HVO North and HVO South. HVO is approximately 24 kilometres north-west of Singleton in the NSW Hunter Valley. HVO is owned by subsidiary companies of Yancoal and Glencore, as participants in the unincorporated HVO Joint Venture (JV). HV Operations Pty Ltd (**HVOPL**) is the appointed manager of the JV.

Whilst operating as one complex, with fully integrated environmental management systems, HVO is approved to operate under two separate consents, with approval currently being sought for the HVO Continuation Project. These current and proposed approvals are as follows:

- HVO North (DA450-10-2003);
- HVO South (MP06_0261);
- HVO Continuation Project (SSD-11826621 & SSD-11826681 - *under assessment*)

Operations first commenced at HVO over 70 years ago, in 1949. Since its inception HVO has been, and continues to be, an important contributor to the Hunter Valley and NSW economy, producing high quality thermal and semi-soft coking coal suitable for use in international and domestic markets. Tenements are held in relation to significant coal resources which remain across the HVO Complex beyond what is currently approved for extraction. In 2024, HVO's direct economic contribution to the Australian economy including the Hunter was \$1.7 billion.

Broadly, the HVO Continuation Project involves the continuation of the life of HVO North and HVO South, from the current approved mining completion dates of 2026 and 2030 respectively, to the end of 2045 at HVO North and the end of 2042 at HVO South. The primary objective of the continuation of mining across

the HVO Complex is to efficiently and economically recover an additional approximate 430 Mt of ROM coal resources over approximately 25 years, which are within existing mining tenements and predominantly within existing and approved disturbance areas across the HVO Complex while maximising the utilisation of existing infrastructure.

Extensive investigations have been undertaken into a long-term plan for the complex beyond the approved mine life to achieve increased recovery of the remaining coal resources while balancing social, environmental, and economic outcomes. This includes providing ongoing employment opportunities for the existing approximate 1,500 full time equivalent (FTE) workforce well beyond the life of the current planning approvals under which the complex currently operates, which will become increasingly important as the local and regional Hunter Valley economy continues to diversify beyond coal. Further detail on the objectives, benefits and need for the HVO Continuation Project, including in the context of international and domestic coal markets, is set out in the SSD application documents available at the following link: [HVO South Open Cut Coal Continuation Project | Planning Portal - Department of Planning and Environment](#) and [HVO North Open Cut Coal Continuation Project | Planning Portal - Department of Planning and Environment](#).

As part of these operations, HVOPL, and its related entities, including through the HVO JV, holds substantial interests in a range of tenements, land and infrastructure associated with our operations and projects.

HTP Interactions with Hunter Valley Operations

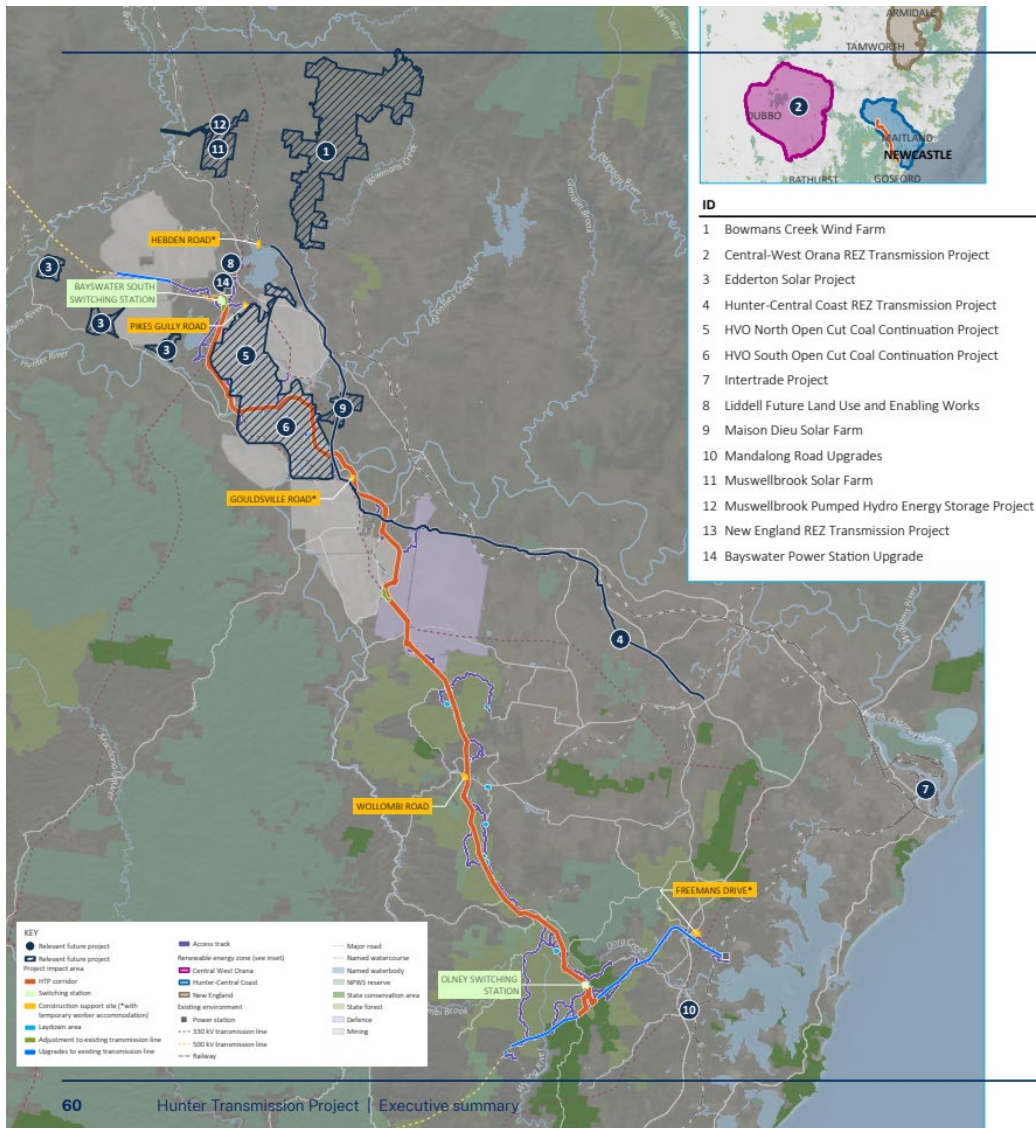
We recognise the importance of the HTP, including that it has been identified as an *'urgent NSW Actionable Project under the Australian Energy Market Operator's 2024 Integrated System Plan for the transition of the National Electricity Market to renewable energy over the next 20 years'*, amongst other things.

Approval sought for the HTP, includes a new overhead 500 kV double circuit transmission line that is around 110 kilometres in length. In selecting the preferred alignment, the proponent has prioritised land selection that impacts on available industrial and mining land, including those across the HVO. This is highlighted in the EIS statement;

"the HTP corridor runs mostly through power station, mining and government land between Bayswater and Broke".

Specifically, for HVO, around 27km of the alignment directly intersects HVO holdings and has the potential to materially impact HVO's current and future activities and interests. Proportionally, the direct interaction and overlap between the HTP and HVO is significant, with approximately 25 percent of the HTP corridor intersecting with HVO land and tenements.

The significance of these interactions is also illustrated on the following plan which is included in the HTP EIS Executive Summary (page 60), with HVO's project operations shown as shaded and marked '5' and '6', with mining in the region shaded grey. Notably, the shaded areas show HVO's current project approval boundaries only, and do not include the broader HVO landholdings and tenements, which also require consideration as part of the HTP assessment.



As such, the HTP needs to be appropriately considered and assessed in the context of the other projects that are currently occurring in the region, including HVO. In particular, for both the construction and operation of the HTP, appropriate impact assessment, avoidance, minimisation, management or other satisfactory measures are required in relation to HVO’s activities and interests in accordance with the requirements of the *Environmental, Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)(EP&A Act)*.

Hunter Valley Operations Submission

We have reviewed the application material, including the EIS for the HTP and would like to raise the following matters for consideration by EnergyCo, the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) and relevant agencies.

Many of these matters have the potential to materially impact HVO’s activities and interests. Whilst discussions between EnergyCo and HVOPL have been ongoing for three years, and we recognise that

considerable effort and cooperation has resulted in an alignment and tower location that generally reflects the consultation that has occurred, we consider that a number of key issues and potential impacts that have been raised in those discussions, have not been adequately considered, or the impacts appropriately assessed and addressed or documented within the EIS. These, and other concerns identified through our review of the HTP EIS, include:

- The HTP proposes to place infrastructure in areas that is likely to have an impact on current and future activities, resulting in constraints to our interests, business and obligations. This includes:
 - mine blasting considerations;
 - construction interference and impacts, including on production;
 - traffic interference and impacts; and
 - physical constraints on our business and interests

Examples include impacts associated with construction of the HTP and HVO's operating haul roads, as well as outages required to HVO power supplies during construction.

- HVO has declared coal resources associated with the HVO Continuation Project as well as additional declared coal resources contained within the broader HVO tenement holdings. The HTP alignment directly overlies HVO tenements and has the potential to impact our ability for future development of these coal resources, with minimal to no consultation from the proponent.
- The HTP is likely to involve impacts on the operation of key HVO mining infrastructure, including surface water infrastructure.
- The HTP interacts with our mining buffer land, farming and other landholdings. There is a lack of detailed information in the EIS on the land to be impacted, which in turn makes it difficult to assess whether the areas subject to the impact assessment align with the parcels of land that have been subject to ongoing consultation on the alignment. The construction and operation of the HTP, which stated above, traverses around 27 kms of land across the HVO Complex, will invariably impact ongoing operations, and activities, including agricultural landholdings, as set out below.
- The Economic Assessment does not consider the impact or costs to our businesses or interests, or the alternatives to resolve these issues.
- Despite our operations covering a large proportion of the HTP Project Area, and the proposed project specifically targeting mining land, the social impacts relation to HVO's activities and the activities of other mining companies do not appear to have been considered or assessed under the Social Impact Assessment (SIA).
- Where the HTP has potential to impact on our operation's ability to meet approvals requirements, these have not been appropriately identified, assessed, avoided, mitigated, managed or otherwise satisfactorily resolved in the EIS. Our operations should not be adversely penalised in these scenarios. For example, where the HTP may impact our ability to meet rehabilitation outcomes, tenement exploration commitments, conditions of approvals (such as noise and blasting issues) or land management requirements.
- The HTP EIS does also not appear to take into account other relevant public policy documents. This includes plans that seek to appropriately plan for, coordinate and manage competing activities, and in particular, the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 and the Strategic Statement on Coal Exploration and Mining in NSW. This is in addition to considering the assessment requirements under relevant State

environmental planning policies including *State Environmental Planning Policy (Resources and Energy) 2021*.

As stated above, we recognise the importance of the HTP, including as a priority transmission infrastructure project under the NSW *Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020*. However, given that the direct impacts and interactions between the HTP and HVO's activities are significant, the extent of the likely impacts of the HTP, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments, and social and economic impacts in the locality, and the suitability of the site for the development, need to be adequately assessed, managed and mitigated in accordance with the EP&A Act.

Despite ongoing engagement with the proponent for a period of three years, we have concerns that key impacts have not been identified or appropriately assessed, avoided, mitigated, managed or otherwise satisfactorily resolved in the EIS. Further, any determination approving the HTP should ensure that HVOPL's mining operations are not placed in a position where we are unable to comply with our approvals as a result of the HTP.

Our position in relation to each of these matters is set out under the corresponding headings below. Once DPPI have had an opportunity to consider our submission, we request that further detailed consultation with the Proponent and DPPI is carried out, together with any further assessments, required to ensure that the impacts of the HTP are appropriately considered and that satisfactory solutions are found.

1. The HTP is located in areas that are likely to have an impact on our current and future activities.

These impacts include:

1.1 Production Impact

The HTP proposes a power line crossing of the primary mine haul road from HVO South to HVO's coal processing facilities. Construction activities will impact haul road use with potentially significant operational and business impacts, including potential safety, and financial implications. These impacts have not been appropriately identified, assessed, avoided, mitigated, managed or otherwise satisfactorily resolved in the EIS. or otherwise satisfactorily resolved in the EIS.

1.2 Blasting

The HTP proposes a powerline adjacent, and in many instances, at locations that directly intersects HVO mining operations and project areas. The HTP has the potential to be sensitive to impacts from blasting, which in turn raises issues and will have an impact on current operations, including cost impacts. This arises from the close proximity to the final line, but also potentially a range of interaction issues during construction for both parties. These impacts have not been appropriately identified, assessed, avoided, mitigated, managed or otherwise satisfactorily resolved in the EIS.

1.3 Power Supply

It is understood that construction and energizing of the HTP is likely to interrupt power supply to our operations. This has a range of potential safety, operational, business and financial implications to us. However, these impacts have not been appropriately identified, assessed, avoided, mitigated, managed or otherwise satisfactorily resolved in the EIS.

1.4 Interactions associated with HVO construction interference and impacts

The construction of the HTP raises a range of interaction issues. These include:

- Access issues and impacts and location of access tracks and any associated issues and impacts;
- Location and siting of construction facilities, construction support areas and lay down areas etc, and any associated issues and impacts. These include but are not limited to the access to the proposed Pikes Gully Rd construction support compound requiring access from HVO land and the proposed Lemington Rd construction compound located wholly on HVO land,
- Timing of activities and any associated issues and impacts particularly where timing of construction activities of HVOCP and the HTP are likely to align;
- Several powerline relocations including Ausgrid and HVO internal lines are proposed as part of the HVOCP. It is understood that several of these works require redesign and recertification with Ausgrid due to their interaction with the HTP as such responsibility for re-work, re-design costs and time should be born by HTP; and
- Safety, training and compliance management on interactions, and associated responsibilities which are not described in the EIS, including mining operations liability for safety incidents, particularly during construction

Whilst key interface issues will be the subject of access agreements with HVO, we consider that the likely impacts have not been appropriately identified, assessed and mitigated as required in accordance with the EP&A Act.

1.5 Interactions associated with traffic interference and impacts

The construction of the HTP raises a range of issues associated with traffic management, including in respect of the New England Highway and Lemington Road. These include the potential for significant impacts, particularly during construction, and at peak commute times. These impacts will affect our workforce including employees, and also result in potential constraints to our operations if not managed appropriately. Further examples include potential business impacts on large loads that are essential for suppliers to our businesses, access roads required for employees and suppliers and haulage routes for products.

2. The HTP impacts on the ability to develop resources associated with our tenement holdings, and potential sterilisation.

As noted above, the HTP intersects and has interaction with a number of our mining tenements. Many of these are closely located to existing operations and infrastructure. The management, exploration, assessment and potential development of resource areas is a significant undertaking for our business. One that requires substantial resourcing and investment.

The Planning Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirement for the HTP require an assessment of the likely economic, social and environmental impacts of the HTP having regard to the requirements in any relevant Government policies. Although the EIS identifies *State Environmental Planning Policy (Resources and Energy) 2021* as a policy that it has considered, it fails to appropriately consider clause 2.19 of that SEPP. That clause requires consideration of whether the project is likely to have a significant impact on current or future extraction of minerals (in this case coal). The HTP EIS assessment of potential impacts on current operations, including extraction and coal within exploration areas, is inadequate. It also does not provide details of the steps that have been taken to avoid or minimise the impact of the HTP on HVO's current and the future extraction of those coal resources within the tenements held by entities associated with HVOPL.

We were provided with information from EnergyCo on affected tenements in July 2025. While this notes some construction implications, the EIS does not appropriately consider the impacts on our declared coal resources within the HVO tenement holdings. Nor has there been any substantive consultation on this issue despite the fact that the HTP alignment directly overlies HVO tenements and has the potential to impact our ability for future development of these State owned coal resources. In the absence of an understanding of the impacts of the development, it is not clear how the Proponent has appropriately assessed these impacts, or that appropriate steps have been made to avoid, minimise, manage or otherwise satisfactorily resolved in the EIS, including how this has been considered in the project alternatives, in developing the proposed alignment.

In this regard HVO request that:

- The proponent engages with us to undertake further assessment and appropriately consider likely impacts on HVO and how these will be avoided, managed, mitigated or otherwise satisfactorily dealt with;
- The proponent engages with ourselves, DPPI, and NSW Resources in regard to interaction issues, impacts on tenements, potential sterilisation and solutions; and
- DPPI and the Proponent liaise with us on appropriate conditioning in this regard, so that our interests are not materially impacted, should the HTP be considered for approval.

3. The HTP impacts on the operation of key mining infrastructure.

The HTP intersects, affects and impacts on a range of existing and planned mining infrastructure. These impacts have not been appropriately identified, assessed, avoided, mitigated, managed or otherwise satisfactorily resolved in the EIS. These issues include:

- Direct impact to infrastructure, including key water supply infrastructure;
- Indirect impacts to infrastructure, including potential EMF, induction and other electrical and safety issues;
- Impacts to electrical infrastructure;
- Impacts to planned infrastructure alignments;
- Potential for business interruptions from impacts to infrastructure; and
- Potential need for various approvals to relocate infrastructure

Whilst we acknowledge that there may be engineering, construction, approvals or other satisfactory solutions to infrastructure interaction issues, these should not be at our cost. Further, impacts associated with the need for approvals associated with the infrastructure relocations required for the HTP, should be included as part of the project, or at the cost and responsibility of the Proponent.

In this regard HVO request that:

- The Proponent engages with us to consider all the implications and impacts on our interests and how these will be avoided, managed, mitigated or otherwise satisfactorily dealt with;
- The proponent engages with ourselves, DPPI, and other applicable agencies in regard to interaction issues, impacts on infrastructure interaction and solutions; and
- DPPI and the Proponent liaise with us on appropriate conditioning in this regard, so that our interests are not materially impacted, should the HTP be considered for approval.

4. The HTP interacts with and impacts our mining bufferland, farming and other landholdings.

As noted in the EIS, the HTP has specifically developed a preferred route that prioritises the use of available industrial and mining land, including those across the HVO. In addition to mining lands, the HTP intersects our interests in farming land, mining buffer land and other landholdings. These impacts have not been appropriately identified, assessed, avoided, mitigated, managed or otherwise satisfactorily resolved in the EIS for both the construction and operational phases. These impacts include:

- Interaction with our agricultural lands, which may lead to reduced areas for cropping or grazing or impacts to cropping or grazing operations or practices;
- Impacts on 3rd party entities utilising our agricultural lands under licence;
- Locating sensitive receptors in our buffer land areas that may impact our interests or constrain our businesses;
- Impacts on, and responsibility for land management obligations, are not clear. Including bushfire, biosecurity, weed management and other land management practices;
- Impacts to the value of our landholdings; and
- Impacts to biodiversity on our holdings. We have investment and ownership of these landholdings, and the biodiversity values present hold significant value to our business.

In this regard HVO request that:

- The proponent engages with us to consider all the implications and impacts on our interests and how these will be avoided, managed, mitigated or otherwise satisfactorily dealt with; and
- DPPI and the Proponent liaise with us on appropriate conditioning in this regard, so that our interests are not materially impacted, should the HTP be considered for approval.

5. The Economic Assessment does not consider the impact or costs to our businesses or interests, or to NSW

The Economic Assessment (in Technical Report 19 - Section 4.2) notes that Coal Mining accounts for 50% of the regional economy. However, despite this, the impacts and costs on the industry or impacts and costs to our interests arising from the construction and operation of the HTP do not appear to have been considered. Further, there does not appear to have been any consideration of any impact to NSW due to potential loss of royalty streams over the life of the HTP. These considerations also appear absent in the Project's Justification.

In the absence of an appropriate level of understanding of the impacts and costs of the development, it is not clear how the Proponent has addressed the impacts of the project. Or that appropriate steps have been proposed to avoid, minimise, manage or otherwise satisfactorily resolve issues in the EIS.

Without this understanding it is not clear how a balance of benefits can be made. In this regard HVO request that:

- The proponent provides to us a comprehensive understanding of all potential impacts to our interests & businesses and engages with us on how these will be avoided, managed, mitigated or otherwise satisfactorily dealt with;
- The proponent engages with ourselves, DPPI, and NSW Resources regarding interaction issues; and
- DPPI and the Proponent liaise with us on appropriate conditioning in this regard, so that our interests are not materially impacted, should the HTP be considered for approval.

6. Inadequate consultation and consideration of issues has been undertaken in the development of the Social Impact Assessment

A significant portion of the HTP, and a larger portion of the SIA Study area, intersects with our mining operations, tenements, land, infrastructure and other interests. However, despite this there has been no consultation with us on the development of the SIA. As such, these impacts have not been appropriately identified, assessed, avoided, mitigated, managed or otherwise satisfactorily resolved in the SIA or EIS.

Further, we note that on 7 May 2025 a Draft SIA was issued to DPPI for Independent Review. Further information on the review or how it was addressed is not provided in the SIA.

In the absence of an understanding of the impacts of the development, it is not clear how the Proponent has addressed the impacts of the HTP. Or that appropriate steps have been proposed to avoid, minimise, manage or otherwise satisfactorily resolve issues in the EIS.

In this regard HVO request that:

- The proponent provides further information on the potential impacts in relation to HVO and engages with us on how these are proposed to be avoided, managed, mitigated or otherwise satisfactorily dealt with; and
- DPHI and the Proponent liaise with us on appropriate conditioning in this regard, so that our interests are not materially impacted, should the HTP be considered for approval.

7. Potential to impact on our ability to meet approvals, requirements and other obligations

We consider that the consent authority for the HTP must consider the manner in which any of the existing mine's existing approvals, management plans and other requirements will be affected. Each site should not be responsible for, or have to solve issues arising from having the project imposed upon them. As noted in several locations in the EIS, this alignment has been selected to prioritise available industrial and mining land. However, it appears that the impacts arising from the HTP and have not been appropriately considered or assessed in the EIS. These impacts may include:

- The HTP placing sensitive infrastructure adjacent to area where blasting may take place, which may have compliance issues or constraints to mining operations;
- Becoming an impediment to other projects in the planning system;
- Potential for disturbance of areas that have and have not been planned for mining disturbance;
- Construction adding to cumulative noise constraints on mining approvals;
- The HTP may impede access to areas for decommissioning and rehabilitation;
- The HTP area overlaps with mining project approval areas, and areas under assessment;
- The project area overlaps with other Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan areas and areas assessed;
- Whilst the EIS notes that the HTP will require Subsidence Advisory NSW approval, it is unclear what implications are for tenement holders and mine operators;
- The HTP and its construction will impede access to tenements. This may impede our ability to achieve exploration commitments; and
- The HTP will impede access to our interests and landholding. This may impede our ability to undertake land management requirements

An appropriate level of detail on how the HTP will impact HVO's interests in regards to potential compliance impacts have not been provided. We also have no understanding if these have been provided to the various regulating agencies. These impacts have not been appropriately identified, assessed, avoided, mitigated, managed or otherwise satisfactorily resolved in the EIS for the decision maker to consider.

HVO has consistently raised its concerns during its engagement with EnergyCo regarding the impacts of the HTP on current and future activities and other interests including landholdings. Despite this, we do not consider that these have been appropriately addressed through the EIS. Whilst we acknowledge there may be satisfactory solutions to infrastructure and mining approval and compliance interaction issues, these should not be at our cost, nor our compliance risk. They are also likely to need adequate consultation with NSW Agencies. Further, impacts associated with the need for approvals associated with the infrastructure relocations required for the HTP, should be included as part of the HTP project, or at the cost and responsibility of the Proponent.

In order to address the concerns raised in this letter, HVOPL request that:

- The proponent provides to us a comprehensive understanding of all potential impacts to our business and how these will be avoided, managed, mitigated or otherwise satisfactorily dealt with;
- The proponent engages with ourselves, DPFI, DCCEEW, NSW Resources and other key Agencies in regards to interaction issues and solutions; and
- DPFI and the Proponent liaise with us on appropriate conditioning in this regard, so that our interests are not materially impacted, should the HTP be considered for approval.

Conclusion

HVOPL reiterates that it seeks to work cooperatively with DPFI, and EnergyCo to identify solutions that appropriately manage the impacts of the HTP on HVO, which have the potential to be significant. However, in doing so, and for the reasons outlined in this submission, the likely impacts associated with the construction and operation of the HTP need to be appropriately assessed and mitigated in accordance with the requirements of the EP&A Act.

We thank DPFI for considering these matters. Please contact Ben De Somer on +61 427 936 734 or Ben.DeSomer@hvo.com.au if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,



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