Brief Statement: We object to the location of the proposed transmission line for *Section 2 – Coonong Road to transmission line 99A (between Morundah and Lockhart)*, in particular near Lake Cullivel, Boree Creek, Brookong Creek and in associated wetlands.

Reasons why you object:

Our family's farm is Lakeside on the edge of Lake Cullivel. Lakeside has been in our family for 5 generations. We are deeply concerned about the effects the proposed location of the transmission line will have on the precious environment of Lakeside and surrounds now and in the future.

On page 45 of the EIS it is portrayed that Transgrid considered three options for the transmission route between Lockhart and Coonong Road. Transgrid's proposed route for the transmission line is extremely unclear on Figure 5.1 *Key Proposal Features* on page 80, in 5.3. *Components of the proposal* on page 81 and 82 and Figure 5-2e *detailed proposal transmission line arrangement* on page 87 of the EIS. Also, on page 79 of the EIS Transgrid states that *"[t]he location for the transmission line tower infrastructure would continue to be refined as part of the finalisation of the design. These elements would be located within the transmission line easement as shown in Figure 5-1."* Transgrid's lack of specificity is likely to have detrimental and irreversible impacts on the precious environment that its transmission lines will destroy. **The exact location of the transmission line matters.** We completely disagree with Transgrid's reasons set out of page 48 of the EIS for their preference of 2c route for Section 2. It is appalling Transgrid consider the impact of route 2c on the environment to be "medium," instead the impact of the transmission line on the environment is extremely high.

It is really concerning that Transgrid are unable to specify exactly where the transmission line will be from the edge of the Lakeside boundary, as it makes it difficult for us to respond to their EIS and there are areas of great significance on and around the Lakeside boundary, which are under treat by these transmission lines.

Our concerns of the transmission line being on route 2b and 2c or any closer to Lake Cullivel/Lakeside are as follows:

1. **The environment is extremely important to us** and we want to protect the precious environment on Lakeside and surrounds for our parents, us, our children and future generations that come after us.

   Lakeside, Lake Cullivel, Boree Creek, Brookong Creek and the wetlands near and where Transgrid intend to put the transmission lines is an extremely significant habitat to various animals, in particular birds, some of which are rare and endangered. Lakeside and these

waterways/wetlands/floodplains are home to abundant birdlife, for example Brolgas, Australasian bitterns (nationally and globally endangered), Australian Painted Snipe (nationally and globally endangered), swans, ducks and much more. The important Riparian Ephemeral wetlands saturation on and near Lakeside, occurs most winters and by Transgrid travelling into these areas (for construction or maintenance) will do significant damage to nests and birds prior to fledging, as well as the water quality. Many animal species, rely on these major breeding grounds to survive. The flooding increases the bird life numbers in the area.

A recent example of the significant birdlife in and around Lakeside, was the sighting of the Australasian Bittern (globally and nationally endangered) on Lakeside on 2 November 2021. We have viewed this footage. This is not the first time the Australasian Bittern has been sighted in the wetlands of Lakeside and adjacent to Lakeside.

"In New South Wales, Lake Cullivel and the adjacent lower Boree Creek floodplain near Urana supported an estimated 25–40 birds in 2000 (Matthew Herring [Wildlife Ecologist], unpublished data) (quote in https://agrifutures.com.au/product/bitterns-in-rice-a-pilot-study-of-the-endangered-australasian-bittern-botaurus-poiciloptilus-and-its-use-of-rice-crops/)...

In EIS there was no mention of the globally and nationally endangered Australasian Bittern and Australian Painted Snipe and Transgrid further states on page 188 of the EIS that:

"Key landscape features of the proposal study area and ***surrounds*** *include:*
• The Murrumbidgee River and a number of named and unnamed creeks occur in the proposal study area.
• No nationally or internationally important wetlands were recorded within the proposal study area. However, nearby wetlands include Lake Gol (around 2.2 kilometres south west), Dry Lake (around 700 metres south), Lake Benanee (around 1.5 kilometres south), Waldaira Lake (around 1.5 kilometres south west), Lake Urana (around seven kilometres south/south west), Lake Yanga (around six kilometres north) and Lake Cullivel (around 300 metres north)."

The fact is where Transgrid propose the transmission line will go is through nationally and internationally important wetlands (see submissions by Matt Herring, Wildlife Ecologist). Therefore, how can Transgrid make the above statement on page 188 of the EIS. Matthew

Herring has referred to Lakeside and the surrounding areas as a *"regional hotspot for biodiversity."* Matthew Herring has been studying this area since 2000.

It also must be remembered that the wetlands are **continuous** through Lakeside, property boundaries and proposed easements of transmission lines and wildlife does not always stay in the one spot.

Further, various studies have shown that the powerlines themselves are death traps for birds. Transgrid indicate in the EIS that they will place flappers on the powerlines. Many of the species relying on these important wetlands fly at night. For example, the Australasian Bitterns have been tracked flying at night and will be unable to see the flappers in the dark.

We reiterate these birds are nationally and globally endangered and the wetlands on and near Lakeside are one of the most important wetlands for these birds (see submissions by Matthew Herring Wildlife Ecologist).

2. Also, it seems Transgrid proposes to put the powerlines where there are magnificent river red gums, which have been a part of this environment for hundreds of years and are habitat for the wildlife. There are thousands of hectares of cleared land that Transgrid could use for their transmission line, so how can Transgrid justify clearing these significant trees?

3. In relation to the flooding depth in the study area, between page 387 and 388 of the EIS there is no information provided about the flooding depth in the study area in or around the Boree Creek, Brookong Creek, Lake Cullivel and associated wetlands. Transgrid could not possibly have a full understanding of the study area, as our family does. We understand Transgrid rely on ecological studies undertaken over a 12 month period. This is not sufficient, particularly in circumstances where a lot of the study area contains ephemeral wetlands/waterways. This is another reason why we question the methodology and accuracy of the EIS.

4. On page 27 of the EIS Transgrid state, "*The overall methodology for the corridor selection process included consideration of a corridor that: • minimised environmental and social impacts and maximised the use of previously disturbed areas wherever possible, including: - avoiding areas of particular environmental sensitivity where obtaining planning approvals and access were considered unlikely - maximising distances to dwellings, inhabited areas and other*

sensitive land uses - preferencing areas of existing disturbance (e.g. transmission line or utility easements, roads, tracks, fence lines and cadastral boundaries) and targeting narrow crossing points of waterways and flood out areas (and their associated riparian habitats such as around the Murrumbidgee River, the Coleambally irrigation channels, Yanco Creek, Columbo Creek and Lake Cullivel).

This statement is untrue in relation to Lake Cullivel. The proposed transmission line does not follow an existing transmission route and is proposed to go straight through extremely sensitive wetlands.

It is acknowledged on page 377 of the EIS by Transgrid that Lakeside and the surrounding areas floods. See below aerial photos of the flooded areas where Transgrid propose to place the transmission lines. You will notice there is a significant area south of the flooded area that does not flood and has already been cleared. Why doesn't Transgrid place the transmission line further south and avoid destroying the sensitive wetlands/waterways and floodplains? Another alternative route for the transmission line is to use the existing transmission line corridor to near Urana (as they have done in the vast majority of the route) or along the Lockhart-Urana Road, which would be more accessible to Transgrid and emergency services compared to Transgrid's proposed route near Lake Cullivel.

5. At 16.3.7 on page 392 of the EIS Transgrid acknowledges that *"Environmental sensitive receivers include surface water features such as rivers, creeks, wetlands and GDEs including: • the major watercourses, such as Box Creek, Murrumbidgee River, Abercrombie Creek, Forest Creek, Curtains Creek, Nyangay Creek, Yanco Creek, Coleambally Outfall Drain, Colombo Creek, Halliday's Creek and Burkes Creek • high potential aquatic and terrestrial GDEs located in the proposal study area (refer to Section 21.3) including Coloboralli Creek, Stringybark Creek, Boiling Down Creek, Sandy Creek and Lake Cullivel.*

Further on page 396 of the EIS Transgrid confirm there will *"Around six to ten transmission line towers would be located in the flood prone area identified near Lake Cullivel."* Transgrid do not mention any other transmission towers in flood prone areas other than the ones in the flood prone area identified near Lake Cullivel. Then on page 394 of the EIS Transgrid set out the **significant and destructive** impacts the transmission lines will have to water quality where and near where the transmission lines are proposed to be.

On page 510 of the EIS Transgrid states *"Construction of the proposal has the potential to result in soil erosion and impacts to land capability in the absence of adequate management measures. Key construction activities that present a risk to soils include excavation and other*

earth moving activities, vegetation removal and the movement of vehicles, plant and equipment within unsealed areas. The potential impact of these activities may include: • erosion of exposed soils and stockpiled materials • dust generation from construction activities • increased sediment loads entering the surrounding waterways • compaction of soils leading to impacts on drainage. The highest potential for soil erosion would be associated with the disturbance of soils on existing slopes during construction. Given the terrain of the construction, the footprint is predominantly flat; however, it includes rolling hills and alluvial floodplains such as areas around Lake Cullivel, Colombo Creek, Yanco Creek and the Murrumbidgee River. Soil disturbance and the associated sediment transportation is a hazard that could occur across the length of the construction impact area. The DP2020a geotechnical report indicates that surface soils have a moderate to high potential for dispersion across the construction impact area. There is potential for short term impacts on soils and land capability during constriction. Disturbed areas would be progressively rehabilitated as construction work progresses to minimise the duration of disturbance. Land would be reinstated to pre-existing conditions or other condition as agreed with the landholder. No long-term impacts to soils or the land capability of these areas is anticipated."

The effect on the water quality and soil on and surrounding Lakeside is of grave concern to the health and wellbeing of all the wetlands, creeks, lakes on and surrounding Lakeside as well as the flora and fauna that live in and rely on this area to survive. The current proposed Transmission lines are very likely to wipe out nationally and globally endangered species.

On Figure 21-2, sheet 9 of 10, on page 508 of the EIS the transmission line goes straight through the wetland south of Lake Cullivel, which is identified on the map as Aquatic Groundwater Dependant Ecosystems – High Potential Aquatic Groundwater Dependant Ecosystems. As you can see on this map this wetland could be avoided by the transmission line, if the transmission line is moved further south, which would alleviate the grave detrimental impacts on this wetland, Lake Cullivel and other surrounding waterways. We note this map fails to identify the Boree Creek, Brookong Creek etc, which would also be significantly effected by the placement of the transmission lines. The technical paper on groundwater impact assessment fails to adequately address these issues raised in the EIS, the detrimental effects and does not even address the impacts on the aquatic areas on and around Lakeside. Lake Cullivel, Boree Creek, Brookong Creek and various wetlands in or around Lakeside are often full of water (see photographs of different parts of the Boree Creek flooding

at different times) and the groundwater report provides no information as to the frequency of this.

The trees and wetlands cannot be replaced, but Transgrid could easily avoid this **irreversible** environmental destruction if the powerlines were moved a significant distance away from the Lakeside boundary, to cleared land that does not flood and away from significant waterways such as the Boree Creek, Brookong Creek, Lake Cullivel and associated wetlands.

6. The powerlines being placed near on the boundary of Lakeside will have significant visual impacts on Lakeside and us. Transgrid's study area is about a bit over 1 kilometre from our family home (which has been in our family for 5 generations) and within metres from the Duckpond, which is a sanctuary on our farm. The Duckpond (on south eastern edge of Lake Cullivel where the Brookong and Boree Creeks meet and join together and fill Lake Cullivel – see photographs below) is an area of great significance to our family, our heritage (6 generations) and the Drummond/Webb/Lehmann/Dunbar/Tobin/Staude families for many reasons. Past family members' ashes are scattered at the Duckpond. We have spent lots of family time and have celebrated many milestones at the Duckpond over the generations. We also share this beautiful environment with many others. It is a beautiful and peaceful place that is truly alive with memories and native wildlife, which will be destroyed by Transgrid's powerlines.

   We understand, from our review of Council documents Transgrid agreed to move the corridor away from Lockhart town; Transgrid citing the visual impact [the initial corridor] would have to residents. Transgrid even acknowledge on page 314 of the EIS that *"This infrastructure would be seen near Lake Cullivel which is a local visual feature…"* and again on page 317 Transgrid state *"the views from these [scenic] flights [from Lockhart Airport, with routes extending to Lake Cullivel] would be of regional visual sensitivity."* Then again on page 324 of the EIS Transgrid state that *"the proposal would create a strong linear corridor across the landscape and would be more prominent on scenic flights from Lockhart (Lake Cullivel). This infrastructure would be seen near Lake Cullivel which is a local visual feature and visually interesting from the air. In other areas surrounding Lockhart, the new transmission line easement would be seen with a complex landscape where other transmission and related infrastructure are seen and would be largely absorbed into the view."* Why can't Transgrid minimise the visual impact of the transmission line near Lake Cullivel as it admits it has done in the other areas surrounding Lockhart, by moving the transmission line away from Lake Cullivel. Where Transgrid intend to put the transmission lines will ruin our views, the peace,

tranquillity and pristine environment of our farm, which is likely also likely to decrease the value of Lakeside.


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7. The area adjacent to where Transgrid intends to place the transmission lines, namely the Duckpond, is significant to Aboriginal heritage, as it contains a Corroboree ground. This Corroboree Ground is not mentioned in the EIS.

8. We are concerned about the long-term impact the overhead transmission lines will have on the beautiful Australian landscape. We don't want to see past mistakes repeated of clearing and disturbing precious land. For example, in the EIS Transgrid do not propose to use the existing transmission line corridor all the way between Lockhart and Urana, so further land will be disrupted and more power lines will be seen as a result of the Energy Connect Project. When a Transgrid employee was asked, how long these [Energy Connect] transmission lines will be used for, he responded *"about 40 years."* Therefore, Transgrid are proposing to make irreversible damage to the beautiful Australian landscape for a short-term use and then we will have to live with even more unused overhead transmission lines and see more destruction of our beautiful country, when new infrastructure is required after 40years. In the EIS Transgrid do not address why they cannot put the transmission line underground and this is a question that has been asked of them many times over the course of their projects. Also birdlife cannot fly into underground transmission lines and underground transmission lines are less likely to be damaged by storms. For us and future generations we really want this

project to be proactive and see real future proofing of transmission line infrastructure by the transmission lines being put underground (follow the lead of some European countries and as seen in new developments in Australia).

9. We are very concerned about our physical and mental health of having the powerlines so close to where our parents live. It is indicated in the EIS that the social impacts of the transmission line are minor. We totally disagree, as it is greatly effecting us, our families and our parents (who have been treated extremely poorly by Transgrid) and construction has not even started. The EIS does not contain evidence that studies have been undertaken to address the effect this transmission line will have on the long term health of livestock and humans living in close proximity to the transmission lines.

   We are incredibly concerned the about potentially very detrimental impact the transmission lines will have on the environment and the flora, fauna and people living in or around the transmission lines now and in the future.

We therefore propose that Transgrid use Route 2a as they have proposed on page 45 of the EIS, for the transmission line in *Section 2 – Coonong Road to transmission line 99A (between Morundah and Lockhart)*, in particular near Lake Cullivel and the Lakeside boundary or along the current transmission line to near Urana as they have done in the vast majority of the route, to alleviate the impacts of the transmission line as we have set out above.

Philippa Tobin (nee Webb), Harry Webb and Josephine Staude (nee Webb)