

6<sup>th</sup> May 2024

James Cox  
Deputy Chair of the Australian Energy Regulator.

**Re: Reassessment of the HumeLink Project for Material Changes in Circumstance.**

Dear Mr Cox

Following on from my earlier submission to you, I wish to reiterate the importance of having the proposed 500kv. HumeLink Transmission Line laid **underground**.

With 78 to 80m tall pylons carrying 24 conductors being **aboveground**, the following list of problems must be considered:

- A flashover from clashing conductors during a high wind event or a fallen conductor causing the outbreak of a bushfire. The cost of repairing/replacing transmission lines after the 2020 bushfires cost \$140 million.
- In the event of a bushfire, even with a 25m restricted area either of the side of the line, fire fighters would still be in grave danger as Transgrid has disclosed the transmission line would **not** be turned off.
- The restriction of water bombing aircraft operating in the vicinity due to heavy smoke and live wires.
- In hot weather, high voltage lines expand and sag to a height of only 9m. from the ground, again increasing the danger of a flashover to occur should a fire truck or farm machinery be driven underneath.
- Damage and loss of power caused by a severe weather event. With the fact that China having admitted they have had to compromise the quality of their steel due the Ukraine War and high world wide demand, surely increases the likelihood of pylons and cables with less strength being brought down by high winds.
- The restriction placed on essential farming operations such aerial crop dusting, weed spraying and fertiliser spreading.
- The restriction to other farm activities – ploughing, harvesting, hay making, mustering stock, fencing etc.
- The disruption and adverse effects on stock especially at lambing and calving times.
- The danger to flocks of local and migratory birds especially Wedgetail Eagles. Twelve were killed by transmission lines in Tasmania last year.
- The relatively unknown affects of the high electro magnetic field associated with such transmission lines on humans and stock.
- And last by no means least, the undeserved severe distress, including thoughts of suicide, affected landholders are suffering, caused by lack of consultation, bullying tactics and having little or no say or control over the situation. Regardless of compensation, many are **against** having HumeLink **above ground** across their farms, resulting in environmental damage and land production loss, bushfire risk and disruption to farming operations.

**All of the above would be eliminated if HumeLink was underground.**

Transgrid claim that to put HumeLink **underground** would cost **three times** as much as **aboveground**. However an independent study conducted by Amplitude Consultancy Company estimated to put it **underground** would only cost **one and a half times** more with compensation costing far **less**. And

when one considers the cost of Snowy 2 having blown out **six times more from \$2.1 billion to \$12.2 billion**, I fail to see how Transgrid's argument stacks up.

To me to put HumeLink **underground** would be a win win situation all round. Better for the safety and security of the transmission line, better for the environment and better for farmers being able to continue using all of their land, including the land above the underground cable along with not having the visual impact, the worry of possible bush fire ignition and land use restrictions.

Yours sincerely

*Rosemary Miller*

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