

File: 15/09/02  
25 February 2003

Mr Sebastian Roberts  
Acting General Manager  
Regulatory Affairs – Electricity  
Australian Competition & Consumer Commission  
GPO Box 520J  
MELBOURNE Vic 3001

Dear Mr Roberts

### **APPLICATION FOR REGULATED STATUS – MURRAYLINK**

The Mildura Rural City Council has become aware that the Murraylink Transmission Company has made a submission to the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC) seeking regulated status for the Murraylink interconnector. As the ACCC would be aware, much of the physical assets of Murraylink are installed within this municipality, which covers an area of 22,300km<sup>2</sup> and, geographically, is the largest municipality in Victoria (refer to attached maps).

Specifically within this municipality, Murraylink consists of a converter station installed at Red Cliffs, approximately 15km south of Mildura, and approximately 135km of the high voltage cable installed between Red Cliffs and the South Australian border.

Council officers (and Councillors) have had numerous discussions with the Murraylink developers since the project was first proposed to the Council with Council officers attending each of the public forums held by the proponents. It is fair to say that the project did not initially enjoy the community acceptance that it does today.

Initial public perception was that the project consisted of an overhead steel tower transmission line and a substation similar to the existing power infrastructure at Red Cliffs. This caused significant concern for both the greater portion of Red Cliffs residents and Mildura Councillors. It is unlikely that a project in that format would have been approved by Council.

This Council and its constituents were pleased when it was learnt that the Murraylink proponents had listened to the Mildura constituents and chosen to underground the transmission line and subsequently approved that portion of the project. Council did not initially approve the development of the converter station and rejected the proposal at its July 2000 Council meeting. The Murraylink developers subsequently changed the siting of the Red Cliffs converter station and agreed to a number of stringent development and operational conditions thereby ensuring Development Approval for the converter station at the December 2000 Council meeting.

Whilst Council has no direct interest in the Murraylink regulated application, it does support the position taken by the Murraylink Transition Company in its application, that any proposed transmission line developed generally from Mildura west to the South Australian border would require significant (or at least strategic portions) of the line to be undergrounded to gain Development Approval from this Council. The region surrounding the Red Cliffs substation west to the Calder Highway and beyond is fully developed with both residential and irrigated viticulture and horticulture activities which could not tolerate the impost that an overhead transmission line and easement would incur.

Additionally, the Murray Sunset National Park is located immediately east of the South Australian border extending west for between 12km and 22km (and from the NSW border south for 115km), the objectives of which, amongst others, is to conserve flora of National significance. It is considered that this area could not tolerate the impost an overhead transmission line and easement would incur.

In assessing new transmission lines in these regions, it is likely that Council would not approve the proposal unless the transmission line was undergrounded through the above two areas as a minimum.

I thank you for allowing the Mildura Rural City Council to make these comments in respect to the Murraylink Transmission Company's application for regulated status.

Yours faithfully

**GARRY HEALY**  
**ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

(GH/GHM)  
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# VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA BOUNDARIES



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# MILDURA RURAL CITY COUNCIL

