

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P215

Name: Deirdre Freeman

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

Morning,

Being a local farmer in the St.Arnaud area I attended the meeting held in our local Town Hall yesterday, 17/4/2023 which was standing room only on a day when all farmers would have preferred to be sitting on their tractors in a paddock preparing to feed our nation not on their backsides in a town hall trying to work out what the hell was going on. With the scant information provided by AEMO over a breath takingly short period of 'consultation' which as we had no representative from AEMO is a word used very loosely I attended trying to make sense of it all. All speakers, predominantly farmers, local councillors, business owners and Dr Anne Webster MP spoke from the heart and also from the head but the speaker who held us all with his every word was Professor Bruce Mountain, director Victoria Energy Policy Centre. Coining his published paper written in conjunction with another Professor in this field, Professor Simon Bartlett, this proposal is a "Monumental Mistake."

You do not need to scar our country and our communities with kilometres and kilometres of massive powerlines. To do so is ethically and morally wrong when there are more effective and less disruptive alternatives at a lower cost to us all. What is the hidden agenda here?

Deirdre Freeman

Primary Producer

St.Arnaud

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P216

Name: Sharlene Bertalli

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

To whom it may concern

AEMO transmission lines is not just going to affect the farmers but all of US.

Apart from the obvious environmental effects and farm bio security issues these lines will bring land and residential prices down substantially. People will not want to move here. As well as loosing some of our farmers. Our town will go backwards and this in turn will affect our jobs, industries, businesses, schools and services we have fought so hard to obtain. Experts in the field have advised that there are alternatives and even current lines that are not being used to their full potential so not just option 5 but all options are not required.

This will so de value our business, if not kill it, been no consultation and just taking what's not yours.

St Arnaud business owner, lifetime resident, farmers daughter, real estate agent, accountant. And love where I live currently.

Sharlene Bertalli

Franchisee Nutrien Ag Solutions St Arnaud Real Estate Agent

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P217

Name: Sharon Arnett

Location: Jeffcott, VIC, Australia

Submission

My name is Sharon Arnett, I would like to voice my objection to the proposed power lines going through the lovely fertile farm land in our neighbourhood. We have lived here almost 20 years, perched atop a hill overlooking Mt Jeffcott, beautiful views across the farms to the mount. The tower will go straight across those fertile farms, for us it's just views that we lose and also the devaluation of our property due to the powerlines, the views are a huge bonus that adds value to our bush block, but for the farmers it's devastating. Without those farmers, shops will close, jobs will go, they are the backbone of the community, it's isn't the best route, as many people have said, just political, I hope my voice can help add to show how much hurt this proposal will cause.

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P218

Name: David Lang

Location:

Submission

VNI west RITT

I'm writing to you with concerns of these power lines proposed passing through my land.

I've only just been informed of these actions in the last two weeks, as a primary producer and land holder the effect of these powerlines running through my property are endless.

Environmental effect on my property.

Environmental risk on the bolangum rangers (which hold a lot of endangered species and natural beauty)

As a 5th generation farmer who has farmed and cared for the land, the effects off these 285ft towers to the natural beauty will be endless.

Fire risk (as been informed you can't drive a fire truck underneath the lines)

Which could cause another black Saturday do we want that?

As read in recent study's 50% of suicides in Australia are men/farmers.

Imagine if you had a 285ft tower placed in your back yard, how would you mental health be? A

These towers are going to effect highly productive farming land, that feed and clothes city family with no respect for our natural beauty.

The urgency of our government to push this project through is debatable as to it Merrett for a national energy solution. Why hasn't under ground been spoken about?

There have been two skill professors do a review on this project, they have put in there report this will be biggest mistake (costly mistake our government will make) they have powers line in the east which are not used to the full ability, why not use them lines the help the power consumers??

Also you telling everyone about saving cost on your power bills, you tell me right now who's going to pay for this 5 billion dollar project?

Let me guess the consumers and rate payers

Everyone in the community don't want these towers so put your big heads together and figure out other option..

We're just going to allow our government to put our state into more debt for the next 25 years.

Pull your heads in and see what the public are saying

As a farmer and land holder we have been through the tough times and have come out on top, we are very resilient people who WILL NOT stand by and watch you walk all over us.

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P219

Name: Mark Bachelor

Location: Slaty Creek, VIC, Australia

Submission

To whom it may concern

I am writing to bring to your attention the complete lack of adequate public consultation in regards to the proposed VNI West Transmission Lines. As a local land owner, with property in the middle of the Option 5 investigation corridor, I only found out about this proposal shortly before the intended close of submissions and at that time I was not aware of where it was going. Failure to notify those of us who are potential affected by this proposal does not constitute adequate public consultation.

It has been left up to the VFF to inform local landowners of the scope of the proposal and to organise a meeting at which we had hoped to get some real answers to our questions. Unfortunately both the representatives of AEMO and TransGrid saw fit to go back on their agreement to attend the meeting, so I take that as another attempt to withhold relevant information from us by your organisations.

Not only will these towers and this transmission line be a blot on the local landscape, but the required easement will be a scar on the land that will impact local farming. Added to this we are now told that you plan to prevent the CFA from fighting fires in close proximity to the line, increasing the fire risk to all of us who will be close to them, if it goes ahead.

It seems to me that the only people who are willing to provide what little information is available to us, are those who point out the lack of any real information from, or public engagement by, your organisations. If your proposal had any real merit then I would have expected that we would have been provided with appropriately supporting information. The complete lack of any such provision says plenty.

We did not move out of Melbourne to end up in a place where we will be exposed to the dangers of high voltage transmission towers and have them intrude into our picturesque sunsets, or sunrises.

Most of our neighbours have been part of the local farming community for generations and have a real love for their land and their local community. The one positive so far out of this current situation is seeing how well the local community can unite when need be, which is what your representatives would have also seen, had they had

the courage to show their faces in town. Not only did the local farmers fill the main road with trucks and tractors, the people of St Arnaud lined the streets to welcome them. Had they bothered to stick to their agreement to attend the meeting, your representatives may have gotten to see what real public consultation looks like.

As it stands, based on the information available, Option 5 is completely unacceptable.

Mark Bachelor

Slaty Creek, Vic

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P221

Name: Joan Barratt

Location: Gre Gre, VIC, Australia

Submission

(Submission extracted below)

Submission on the VNI West – Consultation Report

My family farm is in the Northern Grampians shire, we are broadacre farmers also running both sheep and cattle alongside our cropping operation . We have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes farmland that my family has farmed for over 5 generations. I'm extremely concerned by the impact this transmission infrastructure will have on our farming operations and surrounding community now and in the future. With 3 sons heavily invested in farming and their community, this infrastructure has the potential to undermine the farm's future .When their children take over the farm they will still suffer the same issues .

To date there has been extremely limited information and response from AEMO/ Victorian Government regarding the proposed transmission infrastructure .We have attended drop in information events at St Arnaud, VFF meeting with Vicgrid representative and then a further meeting at St Arnaud town hall where AEMO was to attend however withdrew .We have attended these as the proposed power lines will go through Prime agricultural land , our home and our community . I have read how AEMO and the government understand the need to improve consultation communication and engage with the Community . To date that hasn't happened, thus leaving us completely in the dark to so many concerns

Should the transmission lines pass through our farm land I have no information on what land access arrangements could be demanded by the transmission company before, during and after construction; what costs this would have on my business; and what my rights would be.

I am also concerned that there is no information available to me about the compensation that would be provided because of the impacts on my farming operations including reduced production and decreased land values. It is therefore impossible to provide an assessment on the costs to my business if the project was constructed on my land.

While I'm still seeking information that details the impact of the transmission infrastructure on my farmland, I believe the following issues will impact my ability to maintain a commercial farming operation now and into the future:

. Biosecurity - what guidelines are in place when entering our property , are vehicles completely washed down to remove possible weed contamination.With FMD at Australians back door, this has massive implications to all livestock producers , how can we be sure all protocols are being observed .If there not we are at risk of being wiped out due to disease.

. weed control , who is responsible for this ? Again another biosecurity concern .

.when running livestock we are required to do a LPA accreditation ,this then allows us to sell livestock via the NVD system . Condition of this accreditation is to keep records relating to any chemical application where our livestock are running .how is this conveyed to the land holder? .

Control of Fire . Having been a member and Training officer for our local brigade for a number of

years it greatly concerns me the safety of anyone fighting fires near the easements. I understand that due to smoke being conductive we are unable to try and contain the fire within easement which means potential for large uncontrolled fires .Due to the powerline we are also unable to fight the fire from the air. .Dust generated from headers/grain residue is this conductive, if so how do we harvest under these lines ?

. Insurance - due to the easement and being unable to control the fire, are we covered for crop loss . If livestock are destroyed due to been unable to control fire, who is going to cover the financial loss , in some cases generations of breeding genetics(not to mention the stress of seeing your livestock perish and unable to help) . Machinery loss due to being unable to control fire near easement are we covered ? If we hit a tower with equipment will we be covered ?

Emerging technology-equipment is only getting bigger with more advanced electronic devices, how are these affected by high voltage lines? How can we take on this equipment if we are unable to move about the paddocks due to height restraints and technology black outs .Can we use drones , what does high voltage do to our GPS systems ?

.decreased land values hence decreased Equity when dealing with banks ,and other financial organizations .resulting in less borrowing capacity.

Equipment Height , what equipment and what height can go under these power lines, a Q&A sheet sent out stated "about 5 metres ". Please let's have the answer, not " about ".

Permits- for what do we need permits , cost , where do we go to obtain these , how long does it take to get a reply ?

. mental Health , on average one farmer dies by suicide every 10 days . This is a major issue, I can already see the stress this initial consultation or lack of is having on our community . Have you done impact studies relating to the mental health effects this is having on the communities . Have you done follow up impact studies years later to see how communities are still affected? We rely on our neighbors and community to help us through tough times , you don't need to look far to see how this type of situation fractures relationships . You can't put a price on the cost of damage to people's mental health and the way this proposal has been handled has shown lack of understanding and compassion .

On Monday the 17th April at St Arnaud we were lucky enough to be able to hear from Professor Bruce Mountain who outlined issues, short falls and excessive cost of the current proposal calling it a 'Monumental Mistake' he also explained that there was already suitable infrastructure in place which would require far less cost to deliver the result required. Why are you not listening to the experts?

We need to look for alternate routes and proposals that don't impact on Prime Agricultural land and their communities , that are more cost effective and sustainable in the future .

As farmers we endure floods, droughts and other natural disasters, this proposal is a man made disaster , which we have control of at this stage. The above impacts must be considered when evaluating the true costs and benefits of the proposed project across all agricultural businesses in the region.

Jean Barratt
Cre Cre North.

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P222

Name: John Caulfield

Location: [Unidentified]

Submission

As part of a farming family and through extensive investigation of the proposed VNI West power line project I strongly object to the biased and flawed analysis that has been provided by AEMO.

This is further reflected in the lack of transparency in the consultancy process.

There is a disregard for other options such as combining with existing power line easements such as the Latrobe power lines.

John Caulfield.

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P223

Name: Helen Barber

Location: Gre Gre, Victoria, Australia

Submission

(Submission extracted below)

Submission to VNIWestRITT /AEMO

We send this submission to AEMO to strongly object to the proposed planning of overhead transmission lines that may pass through our family property at Gre Gre North, Gre Gre South and Darkbonee

We object on the grounds of the devastating effect the huge transmission line will have on our property and surrounding properties from a production, aesthetic, income loss and environmental perspective.

Environmental

There is a large natural swamp on the property covering 10.8 hectares and is home to hundreds of waterbirds including: brolgas, curlew sandpiper, Black Swans, White -faced herons, White-necked herons, Wood Ducks, Australian Shelduck, Grey Teal, Australian Grebe, Red-kneed Dotterel, Masked Lapwing and others. The swamp is a great breeding area for birds and a safe haven, resting and feeding area. It is also a haven for insects, reptiles and a breeding opportunity for frogs.

In drier times, the swamp is managed by the North Central Catchment Management Authority and receives environmental water from the Wimmera Mallee pipeline to sustain the flora and fauna.

The swamp has historically been home to Brolgas and the most recent sighting was in April 2023.

The conservation status of the Brolga is listed as Endangered (DELWP 2021) Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act Threatened List Victoria.

Fauna species Include Fresh Water Lignum – Cane Grass, nardoo

Buloke mistletoe (V) Marbled Marsh Wart L (e DSE)

Buloke Trees (Allocasuarina luehmanni) are listed as threatened under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (FFG)

There are 35 indigenous fauna species including 16 wetland plants and 1 threatened species listed by Damian Cook, Elaine Bayes and Karen Jolly "Wetland Condition Benchmarking and monitoring along the Wimmera- Mallee Pipeline"

The surrounding area acts as a catchment for the swamp.

THIS SWAMP AREA AND SURROUNDING BULOKE MUST BE PROTECTED

IT MUST NOT BE NEAR TRANSMISSION POWER LINES

Farmland Area has been home to and managed by several generations of our family. It produces wheat, canola, beans barley and sheep and is a highly picturesque, productive area.

Modern farming practices are adhered to with stubble retention, minimum tillage (one pass only) to maintain soil structure and weed control.

Farm tree corridors have been planted to enhance the biodiversity and flora and fauna of the area.

We are proud owners of our land and worked hard to protect it and be self-reliant on farm income.

Our main concerns include:

Drones and autonomous machinery will be used in the future but will not be able to be used near transmission lines.

Unable to use aerial spraying in the area

The overhead power lines would be an eye sore and destroy the beauty of the area

Severely restrict the operation and production of the farm. You cannot carve up large areas with huge powerlines with 100m easements and have a viable property.

The value of the farm asset would be greatly reduced.

Risk to biosecurity of the area particularly with sheep production

Unanswered questions around the easement including insurance in case of accident, risk of fire and the management of fire and who is responsible for the powerline when it has no further use.

Also lack of consultation and respect to farmers and landholders.

Professor Bruce Mountain and Professor Simon Bartlett state that the transmission project is a huge cost, a huge mistake, the cost is underestimated and that existing Transmission lines could be utilized in Latrobe Valley. These experts must be listened to and advice taken.

Option 5 appears to be the most expensive option.

Cost of power to everyone will increase with projects like this that may not be needed.

Generations have worked hard to preserve the environment of the area, worked hard to pay for the land and are proud of their achievements.

THE LAND MUST BE PRESERVED

OUR FAMILY DO NOT WANT THE TRANSMISSION LINES ON OUR PROPERTY or SURROUNDING PROPERTIES

Yours Sincerely

Lachlan Barber [REDACTED]

Andrew Barber [REDACTED]

Helen Barber [REDACTED]

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P224

Name: Christine Leeder

Location: [Unidentified]

Submission

TO THE DIRECTOR;

I have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes our business of CERTIFIED ORGANIC farmlands .

Your infrastructure and land management standards are in direct conflict with our operations and contravenes the Organic production systems standards. We run a very clean green biological sustainable system with all certified Organic inputs. We protect our lands from border contamination and are fortunate to have fantastic neighbours who consider our risks and remain in open communications to not cause contamination and failure. You would not be able to provide this level of co operation as you are only a corporation without an invested interest in long term biological impacts, you most likely would not disclose the type of chemical used and inform of contamination risks.

Our standards require us to submit a yearly Organic Farm management plan at the same time we are assessed by an auditor. As part of the disease and weed management activities we provide evidence of every vehicle or machine that passes through our land. This must include evidence of wash downs and checks before entry to prevent cross contamination.

Feral animals and pest plants are a serious threat to natural ecosystems such as ours which would be a further source of contamination, we would need to prove that we have demonstrated effort to prevent invasion. For all these reasons we would have to grow additional trees lines borders to protect our lands from chemicals and would have to established paper trail to pass accreditation. All this is time and money to us, this would cause us to be financially unviable and without it we would fail accreditation.

If this proposed line goes through our property we will be immediately out of business and Our nation would lose one of its unique Organic family farms. What an oxy moron when the whole issue comes from the long root-Climate Change and our destructing environmental concerns.

All of this is to provide electricity from a short term plant, wind mills and solar panels that are both tomorrows landfill. Surely with our natural resource and advance technology, uranium and nuclear is the future.

Please don't destroy us

Christine Leeder Farm Owner.

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P225

Name: Bruce Leeder

Location: [Unidentified]

Submission

TO THE DIRECTOR;

I have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes our business of CERTIFIED ORGANIC farmlands .

Your infrastructure and land management standards are in direct conflict with our operations and contravenes the Organic production systems standards. We run a very clean green biological sustainable system with all certified Organic inputs. We protect our lands from border contamination and are fortunate to have fantastic neighbours who consider our risks and remain in open communications to not cause contamination and failure. You would not be able to provide this level of co operation as you are only a corporation without an invested interest in long term biological impacts, you most likely would not disclose the type of chemical used and inform of contamination risks.

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All of this is to provide electricity from a short term plant, wind mills and solar panels that are both tomorrows landfill. Surely with our natural resource and advance technology, uranium and nuclear is the future.

Bruce Leeder Farm owner.

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P226

Name: Phillip McIntyre

Location:

Submission

TO AEMO REPRESENTATIVE

I am a Sheep/ Grain Grower Farmer and i am appalled at the way the proposed transmission line option 5 has been introduced to our community without a care in the world for Us Farming Families and Local People by SNEAKILY pushing it through.

It will cause significant impacts on the Environment and Cost of Living which will Effect Every Single Person and Animal.

The Food Source from Cropping will be Greatly Reduced to Feed People and Animals as a Great Amount of Prime Farming Ground will be Unusable which will Create a Knock-On Effect for Farming Income, Business's and Employment which will LEAD TO UNEMPLOYMENT.

WHAT !!! ARE WE GOING TO RELY ON IMPORTS?

Our Farming Ground will DEPRECIATE, Who will want to Buy Good Prime Farming Ground that a chunk is Unusable for Cropping, which would impact on your Income.

And who wants to be buying ground that has ugly Monstrous, Eye Sores running through your Prime Food Source that feeds the World.

NO ONE.

This will cause DEPRESSION and SUICIDE'S in the Farming Family.

THESE LINES SHOULD BE PUT UNDER GROUND SO THERE IS NOT SUCH A BIG IMPACT ON PEOPLE'S AND ANIMALS LIVE'S AND LIVELIHOOD.

IF THAT'S NOT VIABLE, THEN WE DON'T WANT THEM.

LOOK AT WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN GERMANY, WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN HEAPS OF LIES, GOVERNMENT NOT TELLING US THE TRUTH, JUST WASTING TAX PAYER'S MONEY, TO PLEASE CERTAIN PEOPLE.

ALSO IT SAY'S ALOT ABOUT YOU'S WHEN YOU'S COULDN'T EVEN SHOW UP YESTERDAY AT THE TOWN MEETING HERE, VERY DISAPPOINTING.

REGARDS

Phillip McIntyre



18/4/2023

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P227

Name: Ben Duxson

Location: Kanya, VIC, Australia

Submission

Mr Daniel Westerman

CEO, Australian Energy Market Operator

19th April 2023

This letter is in response to the VNI West Consultation Report – Options assessment (February 2023) and public submission in response to the Project Assessment Draft Report (PADR).

We do not support the Victoria to New South Wales Interconnector West (VNI West) Project.

As a directly affected landholder for Option 5 we do not support this preferred option or the project justification and need.

There is no need for this project to go ahead, according to the submission submitted by Professors Bartlett and Mountain calling this a massive mistake. Questions need to be answered as to why are even considering this project whilst there are so many holes in the whole project. It will not be happening on our land, and we will fight you all the way.

This letter states our strong objection to the Project in all forms as presented in the February 2023 report and associated documents.

Affected party.

As a 6th generation landholder in the Kanya area, we strongly object to this project destroying our natural landscape. We farm in prime grazing and cropping country, with the area well known in the Australian and International Merino industry as a producer of some of the world's finest merino genetics. Such high value land and genetics should not be subject to such hideous development, which is not needed or required for a national energy grid.

Lack of transparent and informed consultation

It is noted that this project has been in the public since 2019 (Project Specification Consultation Report), however Option 5 (currently preferred option) has only been in the public domain since early 2023.

As the impact to landholders affected by the Option 5 plan have not had any direct engagement with AEMO or associated parties, it is unreasonable for Option 5 interested parties to provide sufficient comment on the process and assessments undertaken to date. Due to the size of data, its complexity and history, directly affected landholders and interested parties for Option 5 have not been allowed sufficient time for review in order to make a fully informed submission.

It appears Option 5 has only been presented to the public based on submissions received from the previous public consultation period (2022). It is requested to AEMO to provide a list of affected landholders from previous options that are also still affected by Option 5. It appears that selection of Option 5 has been influenced by choosing a new route containing landholders that have not made previous submissions or comments. This is not because Option 5 affected landholders have been allowed to comment on the project, but because this project was never in their direct path. This approach goes against what is stated in the February 2023 report as one of AEMO's key engagement objectives:

Importance of transparency and meaningful consultation with stakeholders.

While this is stated as a key theme, this has not been demonstrated for Option 5 and it's affected landholders. As an affected landholder, no direct engagement has been requested from AEMO (or their representatives). No indirect engagement (in form of email, letter drop, phone etc) has been requested from AEMO (or their representatives). All information received on the proposed Option 5 has been indirectly sourced from the local community interested parties. The first time this project was brought to my attention was via VFF staff member at a Meeting I attended on March 5.

Therefore, AEMO has not demonstrated any transparency and meaningful consultation with affected stakeholders as part of preferred Option 5. It is requested that this be undertaken before any further progression of approvals for the project.

Environmental considerations

In review of the February 2023 report, we state below areas of concern that will affect both our property and the wider community. All assessment undertaken to date is based on a desk-top, macro analysis. No consideration has been given to individual land and their associated impact.

We disagree that the project objective:

Importance of considering social license issues, including the impact of options on visual amenity, biodiversity, land use, culture, heritage, tourism and bushfire risk

has been fully considered for Option 5 and request detailed environmental impact assessment be undertaken (that is before the formal EIS process) to ensure that all considerations have been assessed to inform the preferred route selection and project justification and need. We believe the information presented to date is insufficient in relation to the following environmental concerns (but not limited to) and should not proceed to the next level of environmental approvals until a robust and scientific assessment is provided.

Visual amenity

Our family has been on the property for 150 years. This intergenerational value has not been considered in the assessment and needs to be assessed in light of past and future generational impact. The landscape of our property will change forever based on the surface impact of the transmission line infrastructure. How this impact has been assessed has not been provided in the available documentation and Option 5 should not proceed as preferred.

Land use

The proposed Option 5 easement will alter both the visual amenity and land use of our property. The full scale of the disruptive nature of both the construction and operational phases of the project is unknown to us as a directly affected landholder. The impact on our livestock has not been considered during construction phases and on the longer-term operational phase (including maintenance requirements/ access etc).

The disruptive nature of construction from a noise, dust and visual assessment has not been provided. This disruption and impact to both the owners of the land and the livestock that live on the land needs to be assessed and provided before the next stage of approvals. Peer review of any technical assessment should also be included.

Biodiversity

A full list of State and Commonwealth impact on matters of environmental significance has not been provided in the February 2023. This data and associated assessment need to be provided before commencement of the next stage of approvals to ensure all direct and indirect impact to biodiversity values has been considered to inform the preferred route. Peer review of any technical assessment should also be included.

Bushfire risk

While this is listed as a consideration, no site-specific information, risk assessment, management actions and /or mitigation measures have been provided. This is a significant risk to our property. This data and associated assessment needs to be provided before commencement of the next stage of approvals to ensure all direct and indirect impact relating to bushfire risk has been considered to inform the preferred route. Peer review of any technical assessment should also be included.

Multi-criteria analysis (MCA) methodology

We request that a peer review of the methodology applied to the February 2023 Report be provided before the next stage of approvals. We request that the weighting as provided in Table 12 be reassessed as the outcome is driven by economic value, more than environmental and social impacts.

We request that additional criteria, such as area of land impacted per property and landholder be included (but not limited to), not just the number of land parcels affected. This is misleading and misrepresents the use of land. It is stated that Option 5 performed significantly better against other options in the criteria of Social (page 70, paragraph 5). Again, this is misleading as you are comparing residential zones to rural land that is fully utilised for production. Again, reiterating that number of properties affected is not a comparable criteria and the weighting assigned needs to change. This is our land, and we will fight all the way to keep this hideous development from destroying our landscape.

In closing we reiterate that the February 2023 report is inadequate in relation to consideration of both social and environmental impact for the preferred route of Option 5. As a directly affected landholder, we do not support this project and will object to any future environmental approvals required. The information provided to-date does not consider site-specific land holder impact, does not consider all social and environmental values associated with current land use and gives no regard to impact on intergenerational values and future preservation of land use and values.

This project will not go ahead. Our community is united, and many questions need to be asked on why this is even considered. We are being railroaded and bullied into having these powerlines through our property, in such haste that it seems to be a desperate tactic for you to deliver on promises you know you cannot meet. Our support for the submission submitted by Professors Bartlett and Mountain suggest that this could be the biggest failure of an infrastructure project in Australia. It is simply not needed and from our point of view will not happen, we will fight for this project to be rejected until it is finally terminated.

Ben Duxson

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P228

Name: Kain Richardson

Location: Newlyn, VIC, Australia

Submission

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this submission on behalf of myself and my young family who are 5th generation farmers in Newlyn, Victoria. Our property is located on the proposed Western Renewables Link transmission line. The last three years have caused undue levels of stress for myself and my family, largely due to the appalling manner in which AEMO and AusNet have facilitated the WRL project to date. The communication and engagement have been woeful from the very beginning with no improvements in sight. It saddens us that clearly no lessons have been learnt from the WRL project in rolling out the VNI West project. Local farmers, landholders and business owners have yet again had this project dumped on them with little warning, appalling communication and very little upfront detail of the potential impacts of the project on people's properties. The AEMO's unwillingness to attend the public meeting in St Arnaud on 17 April was an absolute disgrace. This project, just like the WRL will continue to be met with resistance as long as AEMO and Transgrid continue with this arrogant approach to community engagement, with no hope of gaining any form of social license.

The WRL, VNI West and all other proposed overhead transmission line projects in Victoria must be taken back to the drawing board and a new strategic plan drawn up for the state. It is absolutely unconscionable that in this day and age, while many other countries are pulling down their overhead transmission lines and replacing them with underground transmission, Australia is still set to scar the countryside with dated and dangerous technology.

* While a focus on renewable energy should no doubt be a priority, delivering it cannot be at the expense of our food security. It is absolutely imperative that we protect our agricultural zones, particularly intensive irrigated farming areas with quality soil. There will be no point worrying about renewably sourced energy to power your air conditioner when you have no food on the table. The renewable zones must be focused in logical areas that are not prime food production zones, where locals are willing to host them and they can be logically connected to the energy network without mass invasion of farming land. Otherwise, put the powerlines underground.

* The government, AEMO, AusNet and Transgrid can expect to be hit with mass class actions in the future, should these transmission lines be built and any bushfires not be able to be fought effectively due to the constraints on fighting fires around transmission lines. It is very clear to see, that these transmission lines are

going to impede fire fighting abilities and put many many properties and lives on the line, particularly where the proposed transmission lines are very close to bushland, such as the Wombat State Forest in the case of the WRL. Not heeding the recommendations of the bush fire royal commissions and continuing to build overhead transmission lines will leave the government, AEMO, AusNet and Transgrid guilty of manslaughter.

* The regional economies around the proposed transmission lines will be significantly impacted. This includes not only the farms which are directly impacted, but all associated agricultural businesses, tourism operators and other small business. This is in conjunction with the significant devaluation of private land in the vicinity of the lines. Banks are already devaluing properties and reducing people's borrowing capabilities, without the project even being built yet. The compensation on offer is laughable and in many cases, not on offer at all, where the line does not touch their land directly. If true compensation were to be offered, it would make undergrounding the transmission lines look cheap in comparison. Destroying people's hard earned wealth is deplorable.

* Expert reports have made it clear that underground transmission is a viable alternative, particularly as the original costing of overhead transmission is likely to have been understated, with project costs set to blow out. The amount of money that could be saved on forking out huge amounts of compensation to farmers in intensive farming zones could be put towards undergrounding. The public are not going to accept that undergrounding is not possible. Cost it over 100 years, rather than 40 and include the financial impacts on the whole district, rather than just the cost to build.

Take these projects back to the drawing board, come up with a better solution, then approach communities and properly engage with them. These projects have no hope of going ahead in their current form based on the current approach. Properties will be locked. You will not gain access. Stop wasting everyone's time, money and mental health.

Regards,

Kain Richardson

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P229

Name: Rebecca Kay

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

Hi, I am writing concerned about plans to build electricity towers through local farms here at St Arnaud.

They are unsightly which will impact on the value of our property.

People will dislike the area and not visit.

It will downgrade our appeal to people moving here and farmers will also loose value in their land.

Alternative need to be sought which I believe theirs are.

Local community concern needs to be taken seriously, \

Kind Regards

Rebecca Kay

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P230

Name: Jolie Sampson

Location: Marnoo, VIC, Australia

Submission

Submission on the VNI West – Consultation Report

We are currently on sheep and cropping farm in Marnoo, Victoria. I am concerned not only for the farm with biosecurity of foreign vehicles but also the health and welfare of my young family if the power lines go ahead. I have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales. The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes farmland that I operate a business on. I am concerned by the potential negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on my farming operations and business. If the transmission infrastructure was to be built on my farmland, I am concerned that I have no information on what land access arrangements could be demanded by the transmission company before, during and after construction; what costs this would have on my business; and what my rights would be. I am also concerned that there is no information available to me about the compensation that would be provided because of the impacts on my farming operations including reduced production and decreased land values. It is therefore impossible to provide an assessment on the costs to my business if the project was constructed on my land. Whilst I have not been provided with information that details the impact of transmission infrastructure on my farmland, I believe the following issues will impact my ability to maintain a commercial farming operation now and into the future:

- decreased land value and loss of productive capacity;
- Inability to use tractors and machinery under powerlines;
- inability to irrigate under powerlines;
- inability to utilize emerging technologies such as drones and autonomous vehicles;
- refusal to give notice or inform landholders what chemicals have been used on site causing issues with vendor declarations;
- spread of weeds;

- failure to close gates;
- damage to crops;
- materials left on site causing damage to machinery.

These impacts must be considered when evaluating the true costs and benefits of the proposed project across all agricultural business in the region. I believe the Victorian Government and AEMO should consider undergrounding the proposed project alongside existing transport corridors or on public land to ensure minimal disruption to farm businesses in the region. Prior to the announcement on 20 February 2023 that the corridor for the VNI West project would change, I had no knowledge of the proposed project and no understanding of it potentially impacting my farm business. I believe the community needs more time to respond to this project so a more accurate assessment of its costs and benefits can be made.

Jolie Sampson

Marnoo, Victoria

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P231

Name: Denis Goode

Location: Sutherland, VIC, Australia

Submission

Submission to VNI West

Firstly, we wish to thank you for extending the consultation period to the 19th April which has given us some time to try to understand what is planned by AEMO's proposal.

Approximately 3 weeks ago I became aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

I believe the corridor for this proposed line includes property where my family has operated a wheat, barley, canola and pulse growing business, along with sheep and wool production since the 1875. We also run a hay business which supplies an overseas market.

Our family have been custodians of this land and we treat it with respect. I don't believe that you are showing us any respect. How dare you think you can take over OUR land without any prior consultation

I have listed a few points which I believe have been overlooked in these hastily made plans.

This farmland around Gooroc and Swanwater area is some of the most productive food bowl areas in the state of Victoria and should be allowed to continue it's maximum production levels and not have to surrender 8% to house this ugly transmission line when it could be installed underground.

The proposal is an invasion of our business without any consultation.

How many city businesses would accept a takeover of 8% of their business? For example, a 250ha block would lose approx. 2kms X 100m = 20ha or 8% How much compensation do we get?

An easement wouldn't be parallel with the fence which would mean considerable over spraying and sowing causing increased expense and ruining the sometimes 2 kilometre stretch of workable land. How do we maneuver large machinery through and across our paddocks?

Weed control on the easement would be zero and left to go to seed thus spreading into adjoining paddocks, as this is the case along shire roads and the now decommissioned Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water channels.

The introduction of the GWM Water underground pipeline has proved an enormous improvement in weed control, and we now have our square or rectangular paddocks back.

The Royal Commission into the Black Saturday Bushfires, strongly recommended that all powerlines be installed underground in the future.

Underground power from the supply to any building is now law.

Upon decommissioning in many decades time, how is it intended to restore this highly productive land back to it's original state? Will explosives be needed to remove the tonnes of concrete under each pylon/post structure? This will cause irreparable damage to the structure of this valuable land.

How do we fight a fire when it crosses under the transmission line if we are not permitted to drive under it? How does fire- fighting aircraft attack the fire around the transmission line?

As this is a long-term project, the best scenario must be pursued NOT THE CHEAPEST AND QUICKEST

Denis Goode, Sutherland (10kms NW of St Arnaud)

I have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes farmland that I operate a business on. I am concerned by the potential negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on my farming operations and business.

If the transmission infrastructure was to be built on my farmland, I am concerned that I have no information on what land access arrangements could be demanded by the transmission company before, during and after construction; what costs this would have on my business; and what my rights would be.

I am also concerned that there is no information available to me about the compensation that would be provided because of the impacts on my farming operations including reduced production and decreased land values. It is therefore impossible to provide an assessment on the costs to my business if the project was constructed on my land.

Whilst I have not been provided with information that details the impact of transmission infrastructure on my farmland, I believe the following issues will impact my ability to maintain a commercial farming operation now and into the future:

- decreased land value and loss of productive capacity;

- Inability to use tractors and machinery under powerlines;
- inability to irrigate under powerlines;
- inability to utilize emerging technologies such as drones and autonomous vehicles;
- refusal to give notice or inform landholders what chemicals have been used on site causing issues with vendor declarations;
- spread of weeds;
- failure to close gates;
- damage to crops;
- materials left on site causing damage to machinery.

These impacts must be considered when evaluating the true costs and benefits of the proposed project across all agricultural business in the region.

I believe the Victorian Government and AEMO should consider undergrounding the proposed project alongside existing transport corridors or on public land to ensure minimal disruption to farm businesses in the region.

Prior to the announcement on 20 February 2023 that the corridor for the VNI West project would change, I had no knowledge of the proposed project and no understanding of it potentially impacting my farm business. I believe the community needs more time to respond to this project so a more accurate assessment of its costs and benefits can be made.

NAME Denis Goode

LOCATION Sutherland

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P232

Name: Paul Barrand

Location: Marnoo, VIC, Australia

Submission

I am currently working on sheep and cropping farm in Marnoo, Victoria. I am concerned not only for the farm with biosecurity of foreign vehicles but also the health and welfare of my young family as well as job security if my employer is impacted by the power lines. I have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales. The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes farmland that I operate a business on. I am concerned by the potential negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on my farming operations and business. If the transmission infrastructure was to be built on my farmland, I am concerned that I have no information on what land access arrangements could be demanded by the transmission company before, during and after construction; what costs this would have on my business; and what my rights would be. I am also concerned that there is no information available to me about the compensation that would be provided because of the impacts on my farming operations including reduced production and decreased land values. It is therefore impossible to provide an assessment on the costs to my business if the project was constructed on my land. Whilst I have not been provided with information that details the impact of transmission infrastructure on my farmland, I believe the following issues will impact my ability to maintain a commercial farming operation now and into the future:

- decreased land value and loss of productive capacity; • Inability to use tractors and machinery under powerlines;
- inability to irrigate under powerlines; • inability to utilize emerging technologies such as drones and autonomous vehicles;
- refusal to give notice or inform landholders what chemicals have been used on site causing issues with vendor declarations;
- spread of weeds;
- failure to close gates;
- damage to crops;

- materials left on site causing damage to machinery.

These impacts must be considered when evaluating the true costs and benefits of the proposed project across all agricultural business in the region. I believe the Victorian Government and AEMO should consider undergrounding the proposed project alongside existing transport corridors or on public land to ensure minimal disruption to farm businesses in the region. Prior to the announcement on 20 February 2023 that the corridor for the VNI West project would change, I had no knowledge of the proposed project and no understanding of it potentially impacting my farm business. I believe the community needs more time to respond to this project so a more accurate assessment of its costs and benefits can be made.

Paul Barrand

Marnoo, Victoria

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P233

Name: Anthony Tuder

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

To Whom it may Concern

As a St Arnaud resident I have concerns regarding the implications of the Victorian Government and AEMO'S Proposal to construct a 500kv double circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales .

Having lived in St Arnaud for the better part of my life and in my former career in the stock feed industry in the town; I have concerns on the effect the proposal will have on our farming community and the future farmers that will be negatively impacted.

This will effect our small community of St Arnaud as many of the industries rely on the success of our primary producers .

I believe the Victorian Government and AEMO should consider undergrounding the proposed project alongside existing transport corridors or on public land to ensure minimal disruption to farm businesses in the region.

Regards

Anthony Tuder

St Arnaud

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P234

Name: Barry & Angela Hoye

Location: Sutherland, VIC, Australia

Submission

Barry and Angela Hoye: Gooroc 3477.

To whom it may concern,

We write in response to the abovementioned consultation report.

My wife and I have only recently become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

I, Barry, have lived in this location for my entire 81 years. I grew up here, I went to school just up the road. My wife and I were married 53 years ago, and we have lived here together, raising 5 children. Four generations before me farmed this land and I continued after my father's retirement. I am now retired myself, but my wife and I continue to live here.

We have never had reason to imagine this would ever need to cease. We never imagined we would find ourselves questioning our ability to stay in our home to the threat of powerlines. This is causing us great anxiety.

My wife and I live with chronic health conditions. This situation and the concerns we have about the potential risks are impacting our wellbeing. It worries us that we don't have clear details on what these transmission lines may do.

The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes our home. We are concerned by the potential negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on our ability to continue to live on this land. If the transmission infrastructure was to be built on my land, I am concerned that I have no information on what land access arrangements could be demanded by the transmission company before, during and after construction; what costs this would have on me; and what my rights would be.

I am also concerned that there is no information available to me about the compensation that would be provided and how this activity will impact the value of our land. It is therefore impossible to provide an assessment on the costs to me if the project was to go ahead. My current holding is small, if a powerline were constructed it would

occupy about 10% to 15% of our land. In addition, the functionality of the land might be impacted depending on the positioning of the powerline.

As a dedicated and active Country Fire Authority volunteer, of over 65 years, I have encountered many 'close calls' as fires have ripped through this area. I am concerned when I imagine the increased risk the addition of 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission lines will bring to this already fire-prone area which relies on local volunteers to respond. Not to mention the logistical ability to get fire fighting equipment to a fire with the restrictions in operating around these proposed powerlines.

I also hold these concerns for my neighbours.

Prior to the announcement on 20 February 2023 that the corridor for the VNI West project would change and the town meeting held in March, I had no knowledge of the proposed project and no understanding of it potentially impacting my farm. I believe the community needs more time to respond to this project so a more accurate assessment of its costs and benefits can be made. To have found this news out and then discover the timeline was moving so fast was a double shock.

The lack of consultation and information provided to us has left us feeling like our lives and existence come second to these big infrastructure projects.

In short we are vehemently opposed to this project and more specifically opposed to a powerline being constructed on our property.

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P235

Name: Karen Twigg

Location: Brunswick, VIC, Australia

Submission

To whom it may concern.

Please find my submission in opposition to this project below.

I am a professional and academic historian living in Brunswick, Victoria.

I write to express my strong opposition to the construction of transmission towers in western Victoria. As an environmental historian who frequently conducts research in regional Victoria, I know the area through which the transmission lines are likely to pass, and believe this will have devastating effects on the local community as well as serious environmental impacts.

I also note the article in ABC rural last week (Jane McNaughton, 13 April 2023) in which two of Australia's leading energy experts expressed strong opposition to the project, warning that it prioritised corporate interests over community interests and would lead to higher power bills, increased threat of bushfires and blackouts and unnecessary damage and distress to communities along the corridor. I share these serious concerns and would like to express my strong opposition to this project.

I would appreciate acknowledgement of receipt of this submission.

Regards

Karen

Dr Karen Twigg

Living Histories

Brunswick East, Victoria

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P236

Name: Anna Beamish

Location: Boort, VIC, Australia

Submission

Please accept my submission opposing the construction of the VNI West Transmission Lines.

I am a resident of Boort / Yando, and I oppose the construction of transmission line on or nearby my home and livelihood.

Thanking you,

Anna Beamish

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P238

Name: Christine McGurk

Location: Charlton, VIC, Australia

Submission

Submission for VNI West. 18/4/2023.

To Whom it may Concern.

Forty-eight years ago I married my farmer husband and moved to live on the family farm in the Yeungroon East area. The farm has been in the family name since 1874. For 150 years there has been a love for our property and we are proud of the lifestyle we have created for ourselves and in bringing up of our children and now our grandchildren. In the picturesque north west of the state, the land is fertile, agricultural cropping and grazing acreage, well developed for progressive and modern farming equipment.

10 years ago we were thrilled to have our son and his young family return to live on and work the farm with my husband. This brings the 5th generation of our farming family in this district and maybe we can even envisage the 6th on our property.

Just a few short weeks ago as a community, we were stunned and devastated to learn, through an article in the Weekly Times, that the planned route of the VNI West project had been changed from the Bendigo to Ballarat path because people living there did not want it through their farms. Energy Minister Lily D'Ambrosio hurriedly changed and pushed further west the alternative Option 5 route, encompassing our farmland. Why would the route be changed to the North West area which is longer and more expensive to build than the original proposed Bendigo/Ballarat line? This option which is now being pursued, is documented to harvest far less renewable energy than the original corridor. It is apparent that we have become political pawns. The decision makers have yielded to pressure from Labour held political seats and pushed the interconnector into the more sparsely populated coalition North West electorate, hence making our local farmers feel expendable. Please try to imagine the despondency in these communities.

Initially farmers could gain no information from AEMO or anybody. Word of mouth from farmer to farmer seemed to be the only avenue of obtaining any information and AEMO were unable to help either. Communities held their own meetings in an attempt to become more informed.....all to no avail. The farming districts are devastated as to how they are being treated. No consultation, no information. There is only a footprint on a map

as to where the suggested corridor may be going. A very short time frame was left to comprehend the enormity of the project and get our heads around what it will mean to us. The preparing of submissions to put forward our concerns and express our despair still leaves us with feeling irrelevant in the whole process.

Do our farming community have any rights? Are we not deserving of having input into this route? Unlike the respect given to residents along the Option 3 path, our communities fear decisions are being made without our consideration. No initial consultation, a few unsatisfactory community information meetings with young uninformed AEMO employees, a restricted webinar and now recently AEMO and Transgrid representatives failing to attend a meeting with the community who are still attempting to gain answers as to what is going on.

Do our farmers wives need to have their husbands stressed and unhappy because they do not know and can't find out what is being threatened to their land?

We have evidence of indigenous activity in our area which has been respectfully protected over the years. Are we not worthy of the same respect? Farmers have been custodians of the land for 150 years in our district and have worked hard caring for the soil, and protecting flora and fauna.

Our farmers are increasingly upset, feeling lost and even depressed. It seems we have no rights as to what can happen to our farms, or be given the decency and respect to be consulted. The scant information that has been circulated has often been conflicting and not consistent. Even the date for Submissions was not made without confusion.

Our farmers are becoming increasingly upset feeling lost and depressed. The community is becoming angry as they attend meetings giving no further information, other than the foot print on a map.

We farm in a picturesque part of the state. None of us want to see our paddocks carved up with these huge pylons, with sagging lines complicating the movement of modern machinery. The easement areas, plus the area directly beneath the lines will cut into the acreage that the farmer can cultivate and we are still not sure what we are able to do in such areas. No one knows where machinery of the future will take us and there is no guarantee that the design of the towers will meet this need. Farming has changed lots during each generation.

We have genuine concern for a property that is put up for sale. It is not just ourselves that dislike the huge pylons. Would you purchase land or a house block that runs nearby to a pylon? I would think you would possibly say "no." If someone has the choice to purchase land that is pylon free, they will do so, rather than buy a property that is carved up with the metal monstrosities. This creates another concern for property owners considering moving away from their farm, which has become their Superannuation. The land has been devalued because of the transmission lines.

Although the Fact sheets from AEMO, indicate that it is safe to live near the pylons and lines is there evidence that this is true? What are the effects on our livestock grazing under the line? Will there be repercussions on the property's meat that is offered for sale?

Our Government has recently put on hold or even cancelled the City Airport train link along with the Geelong fast train line due to costing and lack of funds. Why couldn't the unpopular VIN West

project also be cancelled and already existing lines be upgraded and used at a far more economical costing, particularly in this time of massive State debt.

I beg you to view our reluctance to have the VNI West project traverse and destroy our farms and understand how the whole process has made us feel that we just don't matter.

Christine McGurk, Charlton. 3525

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P239

Name: Jackie Peacock

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

To whom it may concern

I am a business owner in St Arnaud Victoria. I am a certified drone operator and use a drone as part of my business.

I have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes farmland that I operate a business on. I am concerned by the potential negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on my business.

Whilst I have not been provided with information that details the impact of transmission infrastructure on land my business is situated on, I believe the following issues will impact my ability to maintain a commercial drone operating business now and into the future:

- * inability to utilise technologies such as drones;
- * loss of business and productive capacity;

I believe the Victorian Government and AEMO should consider undergrounding the proposed project alongside existing transport corridors or on public land to ensure minimal disruption to businesses in the region.

Prior to the announcement on 20 February 2023 that the corridor for the VNI West project would change, I had no knowledge of the proposed project and no understanding of it potentially impacting my business. I believe the community needs more time to respond to this project so a more accurate assessment of its costs and benefits can be made.

Kind regards

Jackie Peacock

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P240

Name: Rose Harris

Location: Gooroc, VIC, Australia

Submission

To whom it may concern,

Below is the submission put forward by my elderly parents in opposition to Option 5 of the VNI West project.

I wish to add my own thoughts. The amount of stress and anxiety my mum and dad have endured throughout this 'consultation' period is truly worrying. The lack of consultation and answers those involved have presented to my parents and their neighbours has been inexcusable. They only found out about the proposal at a VFF organised meeting, yet I have read so much on your website of your extensive consultation to garner 'social licence'.

I've recently moved to Queensland, and despite several health battles, there has not been a time I have heard such stress in my parents voices than I have over this issue. Every time a plane or helicopter flies over their home, they feel like they are being measured up for the clearing of five generations, for a home they have worked through droughts and floods to raise their five kids in and now, finally, get to sit back and watch their grandkids enjoy the adventures on the farm.

Aside from the unknown impacts on their home, the increased bushfire risk and commercial impacts on them and their neighbours, the lack of attempt to even consult is a pure insult. Not a letter, not a visit, not even an ad in the local paper to let people know they had the chance of being informed early on. Any chance you may have had of social licence is now well and truly gone due to this disrespect. I think you can see that now in the reaction from the local St Arnaud community.

My mum and dad are not the whinging type. They have worked hard, volunteered and contributed an extraordinary amount to the community and love their life in Gooroc. They once donated land at the end of their driveway to have the local CFA shed built, they are not against progress and building a stronger community. Yet, this proposal couldn't be further from this. It appears as if rural people are being put second to this desktop assessment. These people are asking reasonable questions, yet there seems to be no answers. As if they aren't worth answering to, they are just country folk. Well, those country folk are my mum and dad in a stage of their life they should be enjoying all they have worked so hard for.

Sincerely,

Rose Harris

Re: submission from Barry and Angela Hoye (noted at Submission P234)

Barry and Angela Hoye: Gooroc 3477.

To whom it may concern,

We write in response to the abovementioned consultation report.

My wife and I have only recently become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

I, Barry, have lived in this location for my entire 81 years. I grew up here, I went to school just up the road. My wife and I were married 53 years ago, and we have lived here together, raising 5 children. Four generations before me farmed this land and I continued after my father's retirement. I am now retired myself, but my wife and I continue to live here.

We have never had reason to imagine this would ever need to cease. We never imagined we would find ourselves questioning our ability to stay in our home to the threat of powerlines. This is causing us great anxiety.

My wife and I live with chronic health conditions. This situation and the concerns we have about the potential risks are impacting our wellbeing. It worries us that we don't have clear details on what these transmission lines may do.

The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes our home. We are concerned by the potential negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on our ability to continue to live on this land. If the transmission infrastructure was to be built on my land, I am concerned that I have no information on what land access arrangements could be demanded by the transmission company before, during and after construction; what costs this would have on me; and what my rights would be.

I am also concerned that there is no information available to me about the compensation that would be provided and how this activity will impact the value of our land. It is therefore impossible to provide an assessment on the costs to me if the project was to go ahead. My current holding is small, if a powerline were constructed it would occupy about 10% to 15% of our land. In addition, the functionality of the land might be impacted depending on the positioning of the powerline.

As a dedicated and active Country Fire Authority volunteer, of over 65 years, I have encountered many 'close calls' as fires have ripped through this area. I am concerned when I imagine the increased risk the addition of 500kv

double-circuit overhead transmission lines will bring to this already fire-prone area which relies on local volunteers to respond. Not to mention the logistical ability to get fire fighting equipment to a fire with the restrictions in operating around these proposed powerlines.

I also hold these concerns for my neighbours.

Prior to the announcement on 20 February 2023 that the corridor for the VNI West project would change and the town meeting held in March, I had no knowledge of the proposed project and no understanding of it potentially impacting my farm. I believe the community needs more time to respond to this project so a more accurate assessment of its costs and benefits can be made. To have found this news out and then discover the timeline was moving so fast was a double shock.

The lack of consultation and information provided to us has left us feeling like our lives and existence come second to these big infrastructure projects.

In short we are vehemently opposed to this project and more specifically opposed to a powerline being constructed on our property.

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P241

Name: David Binks

Location: Diamond Creek, VIC, Australia

Submission

18th April 2023 David R Binks

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Victoria to New South Wales Interconnector West (VNI West) and

Western Renewables Link (WRL)

Property: Vol 6183 Folio 424, CA 8 & 9, Section A, Parish of Moorarbool East

WRL Ref: 177.1

Introduction

I am one of the owners of the above farming property of 66.862 ha at Blakeville Road, Ballan

North upon which AusNet plans to construct two electricity transmission towers within a

proposed 70m wide, 500kV transmission-line (TL) easement running diagonally across this

farm, from near its south-east corner to the north-west corner, as shown in the plans

attached to this submission. The AusNet proposal is to also construct over 1.1km of access

roadway across our farm, the TL easement alone accounting for 11.37% of our farm land.

Thank you for the time-extension to respond to the VNI West proposal to carve up more

landholders properties with 500kV over-head electricity transmission lines.

Conclusions

a) The Marinus Link project (see vi) below) provides a suitable template for all new Victorian electricity transmission lines – it has the support of the Federal and State Governments, as well as that of the Victorian communities it crosses and the landholders, including my relatives, of properties through which it is building its transmission lines.

In the words of my South Gippsland, dairy-farming cousin: “It’s a no-brainer to go underground!”

b) The Victorian Government and AEMO should consider undergrounding the proposed project (using HVDC) alongside existing transport corridors or on public land to ensure minimal disruption to farm businesses in the region.

c) The Victorian Government and AEMO must listen to the affected landholders and communities and explore feasible alternatives to the current proposals, otherwise it will result in increased and continued opposition.

Comments

i) I understand the VNI West involves the development of a new 500-kilovolt high voltage alternating current (HVAC) interconnector between the Snowy Mountains region and Melbourne to increase transfer capacity between New South Wales and Victoria

Page 2 of 2

ii) I understand that the North Ballarat terminal station was not moved because of community concerns and objections. This move will force the upgrading of the entire WRL project to 500kV overhead transmission lines and 80m high transmission towers. This decision did nothing but increase the detrimental impacts of this project

on the region, and it was not a “win” for regional Victoria.

iii) The proposed shared alignment of both VNI West and the WRL will create a very significant electricity supply line between Ballarat and Sydenham which will bring the risk that a single-point failure in this line would severely impact system security, due to the drastic reduction in the supply of power generated in Western Victoria and imported from NSW.

iv) The geographical area of the current proposed WRL alignment is peri-urban and traverses environmentally sensitive areas, has long established land uses and includes a growing number of high value landholdings. It is also a high value tourism region with populated towns. Its topography is not suited to over-head transmission development.

v) The Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T) is a public cost benefit analysis test that electricity transmission network service providers (TNSPs) must apply to potential prescribed (regulated) investments in the transmission network that exceed \$6 million.

It seems to me that the RIT-T was not applied in a credible way to reduce misunderstandings and disputes. It must have a focus on providing transparent, user friendly data to all stakeholders.

v) The Multi-criteria Analysis is flawed because it did not seek to understand what we value and what is important to us. It was a desktop study by people who did not speak with the people impacted.

As for the WRL, AusNet has not engaged with the communities affected other than to try and deal with the affected individual landholders – on a “divide and conquer”

basis. The multi-criteria analysis must be applied to the WRL to determine the least impact solution

vi) The Australian, Victorian and Tasmanian Governments all support the Marinus Link project to bring high-voltage, direct-current electricity (HVDC) from Tasmania to the Latrobe Valley.

The Marinus Link is going underground across the rich farming lands from landfall in Southern Gippsland to the Latrobe Valley, which includes through the dairy farms on Loves Lane, Dunbalk owned by my relatives

Marinus Link announced on 3rd March 2023 that it was "finishing up its current round of geotechnical investigations between Mirboo North and Waratah Bay", and in so doing thanked "communities and landowners for their cooperation and patience during these important surveys".

Yours faithfully,

David R Binks FIEAust CPEng(Retd)

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P243

Name: Rogan Hando

Location: [Unidentified]

Submission

AEMO transmission lines is not just going to affect the farmers but all of US.

Apart from the obvious environmental effects and farm bio security issues these lines will bring land and residential prices down substantially. People will not want to move here. As well as losing some of our farmers. Our town will go backwards and this in turn will affect our jobs, industries, businesses, schools and services we have fought so hard to obtain. Experts in the field have advised that there are alternatives and even current lines that are not being used to their full potential so not just option 5 but all options are not needed.

Concerned town member, farmers son and love where I live.

Rogan Hando

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P244

Name: Johanna Medlyn

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

To Whom it May concern

I strongly object to option 5 for the transmission power lines. What an eye sore, a waste of space, a health risk, a sky hazard, a waste of money.

Please put them underground. This will be a mistake for another 100 years. Please don't do the is to our little town.

Kind regards,

Johanna Medlyn

Senior Physiotherapist & Owner

St. Arnaud Physiotherapy Centre

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P245

Name: Anne Michael

Location: [Unidentified]

Submission

To AEMO

I say NO to POWER LINES on my property

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P246

Name: Sandra Rowlands

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

I wish to clearly state my opposition to current plans for transmission lines in Victoria.

This is a government I elected and I would expect it to represent myself and more importantly the majority of Victorians who oppose such short sighted infrastructure.

Sandra Rowlands.

St Arnaud and Smeaton.

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P247

Name: Trevor & Robyn McDonald

Location: Sutherland, VIC, Australia

Submission

As 5th generation broad acre farmers at St Arnaud North, we were horrified to learn recently that a portion of our farm could be required to build a 500kV transmission line to connect Victoria's power grid into NSW. Our initial response was "Why would anyone deem it wise to further reduce the area of productive farming land in an already overcrowded world?"

It appears that the government, having run into obstacles on other proposed options, and now finding themselves desperate to safe guard Victoria's renewable energy power supply, have seen a big open space on a map in Victoria's north west and decided that would be the solution to their problem. AEMO themselves have admitted that this is not their preferred option, so why build something that fails to go even close to attaining the desired outcome? As a successful private enterprise, we could not afford to run our farming business on those principals, and nor should "second best" be good enough for the people of Victoria who are the beneficiaries of this project, but ultimately will have to provide the enormous funds required to build it. We have been promised cheaper green power, but that will not be a reality for many, many years to come under the current proposal.

That "big open space" that now has a 50 X 220km wide question mark hanging over it, is the home and livelihood of dedicated farming families, many of them having been here for close on 150 years; – families who have a vested interest in sustainable farming and caring for the environment. Ours is not a 9 to 5 job, it is one that has in many instances been bequest to us, a privilege we are indeed blessed to have. We spend our lives continuing to care for and improve the land our fathers and their fathers before them cared for, doing so in the hope that we will in turn be leaving our small part of the world, a better place for our descendants to continue caring for after we have gone. The image of 80 metre high steel structures cutting a swathe through our farms is not the legacy we want to leave for our descendants.

Despite having attended community information sessions and meetings in recent weeks where we hoped to get some answers to the many questions we have in relation as to how this proposal will impact our lives and farming businesses, we have come away with nothing but feelings of frustration and anger. We have been treated with contempt and disrespect with very, very few answers provided! The unwillingness of government, Trans Grid & AEMO to meet with, and provide answers is only adding to our substantial fears of what life with this powerline

will entail. If there is nothing to hide or fear, why won't you meet with us? AEMOs cowardly decision not to attend the VFF meeting held at St Arnaud on April 17th is surely the actions of an enterprise with something to hide! Farmers in the Ballarat region have been asking similar questions for the past 3 years – surely by now someone can provide some honest answers!

What “foot print” will this project leave on our beautiful landscape? How much energy is going to be used in the production of the steel required for these giant towers? And are we going to be using Australian made steel or importing second grade steel from overseas - steel that has a reputation for crumpling when put under stress (such as in violent windstorms). And what becomes of these transmission lines when they are superseded by further advancements in technology in coming years? How much heavy vehicle traffic will be travelling across our land in the construction of this project as there is obviously considerable concrete being used in the base of each tower? And what strategies are going to be undertaken in the event of unsuitable weather conditions? We would like to point out that for more than 3 months last year we were not even able to access some of our paddocks even in a 4 wheel drive vehicle due to wet weather.

How can someone sitting in an office building in our capital cities have any real understanding of the complexities of 21st century broad acre farming and the impact high voltage powerlines will have on it? There are the very real and well documented issues such as

: bio security and animal welfare

: decrease in land value

: inability to use emerging technology such as drones/ GPS

: the requirement for permits to undertake what is routine work on our own land,

: inability to fight fires in the vicinity of the easement

: lack of insurance

: the ability to operate large machinery in the vicinity of the easement

to name but a few, but there are many other issues arising from this project that have had very little coverage. We have been told that houses must be a minimum of 300 metres from the transmission line, but no mention has been made of what will be done with farm infrastructure such as shearing sheds, dairies, grain silos etc that might happen to fall within the easement, as it will not be possible to avoid them all. Are farmers given a guarantee that they will be compensated fully for the considerable expense and inconvenience of having to relocate them, - and have those costs been factored into the budget for this project? (Bearing in mind that at this stage no one knows exactly where the line is going, we have no confidence in the current costings for this proposal at all.)

I could continue with a multitude of other questions BUT we attended the VFF meeting in St Arnaud yesterday - the one AEMO chose not to attend which has proved to be very much to their own detriment. There were over 300 people at that meeting, all there hoping to get some answers from you, blissfully unaware until we arrived that you had reneged on your agreement to attend. Your absence turned out to be a huge positive for everyone of those 300 plus people who had the privilege of hearing last minute substitute speaker, Professor Bruce Mountain deliver a very informative address, informing us that this entire project is a "monumental mistake", and that there are other, far better, and cheaper options that must be given serious consideration. The substantial evidence provided by 2 very learned, intelligent men who have nothing to gain financially from this proposal, has shown us all that what is being proposed must not be allowed to go ahead. For the sake of all Victorians, we will not be sitting back quietly and allowing the VNI West 5 proposal to destroy our farms and communities unnecessarily.

Trevor & Robyn McDonald

Sheep & grain producers, Sutherland.

Individual submission

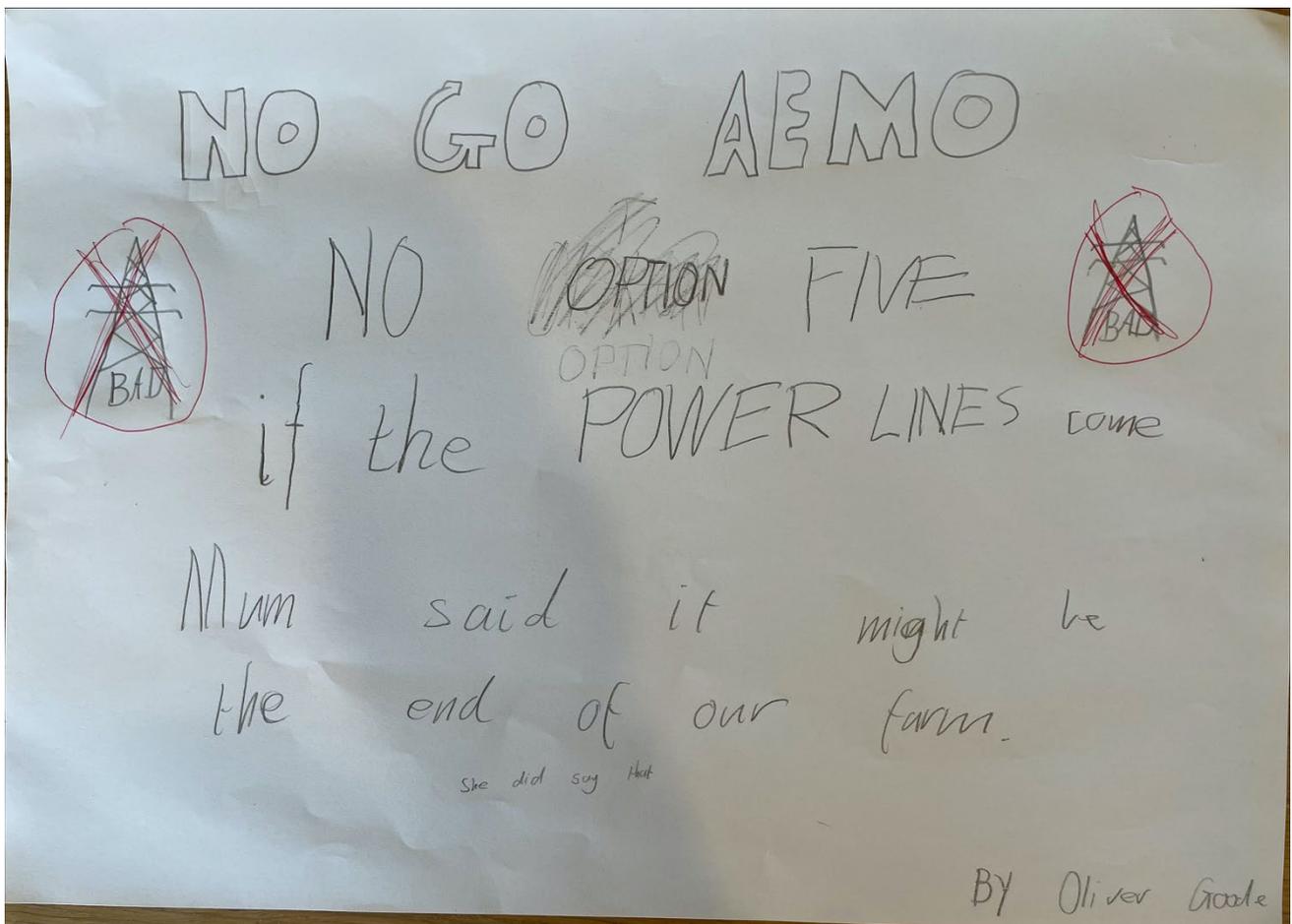
VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P248

Name: Oliver Goode

Location: Sutherland, VIC, Australia

Submission



Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P249

Name: Andrew Petrie

Location: Stawell, VIC, Australia

Submission

I wish to submit an objection to Option 5 of the western renewable link.

Having grown up on the family farm in the community and owning and running my own business relying on the farming community to earn our living we can see the disadvantages this proposal has for the whole community and ourselves. Unsightly structures, Unusable valuable agricultural land, Loss of ability to farm as required, directly effecting my business aswell. What I can't get over, is the total lack of consultation, consideration & disrespect of farming communities.

NOT IN FAVOUR OF

Andrew Petrie

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P250

Name: William Lane

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

The contempt your department has displayed to this community is incredible.

Your refusal to attend the organised information meeting however allowed us to obtain information that is not forthcoming from your department

It is obvious as a result of this meeting that this line is not best practice , and not in Victoria's or community interest. New technology has already rendered it obsolete.

My property at [WITHHELD] has both irrigation and bees which is totally incompatible with your connector.

This instillation would remove huge amounts of highly productive farm land from use and threaten the viability of many.

Fire risk and the inability to control fire near or under these lines will likely render many of our properties uninsurable.

The suggested compensation to landholders is a joke, when every property within over fifty kilometres would be devalued by almost 20%.

I believe this community and myself have a duty to prevent the Victorian Government and AEMO from proceeding with (VNI) west . To proceed would be contrary to expert advice.

William Lane

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P251

Name: Dylan Gowlett

Location: Donald, VIC, Australia

Submission

Subject: VNI west powerline transmission Submission

In the last 2 weeks I have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a power transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The proposed routing for the transmission lines, highlighted in Pink on the supplied map, traverses farmland where land owners operate their businesses. I am concerned by the detrimental negative impacts that such a transmission line infrastructure will have on many farming operations in the region.

We have not had any questions answered and basically no consultation in the process whatsoever. 3 people out the front of the local town hall, who can't even answer a question as simple as how tall the towers are, does not justify public consultation.

The commercial impact on the affected landowners is seen to be significant and with potential to ruin local farmer livelihoods.

Some of the issue's landowners face include -

- * Land owners cannot work safely under the lines.
- * Land owners cannot use machinery under the lines.
- * Land owners cannot run stock under lines.
- * Volunteer firefighters cannot fight fires underlines.
- * What happens to the towers when they condemn them?

* Only to name a few of the basic destructive complications that the powerlines will have on the people who have to work and live with them!

* We need to be aware of the evolving new age agricultural technology.

From a CFA point of view, if fires can't be fought near or under the transmission lines, then it could potentially burn many hectares before being brought under control.... We don't want another Black Saturday do we? This could claim the lives and homes of many vulnerable people and animals again!

I believe that option 5 is not the answer for the renewable energy transmission lines and strongly oppose this option.

The Victorian Government and AEMO must put the lines underground along existing transport corridors not on highly productive farm land that will rip communities and families apart.

DYLAN

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P253

Name: Patrick Shannessy

Location: Donald, VIC, Australia

Submission

Dear AEMO and Minister,

1. This same submission is attached and reproduced here for convenience. We are farmers in the pathway of Option 5 and only learned of the opportunity to have our say last week (after 5 April 2023). Please take our submission into account.

2. This submission has two parts, the first being a submission as to the scheme overall, and the second being a submission regarding the Western edge of option 5 that is in four parts.

Background to Swanwater

3. Our property is the historic Swanwater Homestead at 1358 Sunraysia Highway, Swanwater Via StArnaud 3478. In the absence of better information that has not been provided this submission will proceed on the basis of the word of mouth information that Option 5 will actually cross the Sunraysia Highway at Swanwater very close to the intersection of Volcano Rd and the Sunraysia Highway (aka the Donald Road). This puts the crossing of the Sunraysia Highway at the very front gate of what is known as the Avenue or entrance road off the Highway to the original Swanwater property and then proceeding roughly North North East through the Homestead property paddocks known as “the Stud”, “the Windmill”, “the Park” and “the Racecourse” and will run along the Swanwater Creek that end up in Browns Lake. This will take the line across the magnificent very front outlook of the original Swanwater Homestead main house (the outlook from the East facing front veranda), garden and cemetery towards Sutherlands and Mt Yarwong. The crossing of the power line over the Highway will be close to the swamp (known as the Slush dam) and the Swanwater Creek and run along the Creek or parallel to it.

The Three Eras

4. The history of Swanwater falls into 3 eras. The first and longest era and likely of some 50,000 or so years is that of the traditional owners. They cared for and farmed the land over that time (see “The Greatest Estate on Earth”). The next is the “Squatter” or early European settler era of large acre grazing, commenced with Captain Harrison

and ended during the life of VN Mogg. The last or current era commences with the land selection Acts of the 1870's and the era of cultivation of (European) grains and legumes.

5. The first European settler described in detail the significant traditional owner community living on and farming the waterway of the swamp and the Swanwater Creek (see *Running With The Ball*, Mancini A and Hibbins G.M, Lynedoch Publications Melbourne 1987, a researched edited version of the 1926 autobiography of HCA Harrison (aka the "Father of Australian Rules Football" page 42) who lived at Swanwater Homestead from c. 1844 to 1852, at pages 77-79. You will find his account laden with the ignorance of that time but that will not detract from the accuracy of account of the traditional owners living on the creek (apparently in the path of Option 5). It can be easily inferred they had done so for many millenniums. HCA Harrison ('HCA') was the son of Captain Harrison, the first European settler who gave the name to the district of Swanwater and one of Victoria's earliest liberal agitators. Apart from settling at Swanwater he was an early anti-monarchist and anti-taxation activist and later representative of the Ballarat and Bendigo gold miners in negotiations over the "Miner's Right" and fees. HCA was a cousin of T (Tommy) Wills, the Captain of the inaugural Victorian Cricket team and author of the first draft of the rules of Australian Rules Football and personally responsible for the introduction of the oval "Rugby" style ball (the alternative was the round "Association" (now known as soccer) ball.

6. Captain Harrison's original house/saddlery/blacksmithy still stands on the property and is well cared for.

7. When the captain and his son, HCA, settled at Swanwater there were no Victorian towns except Portland, Geelong, Melbourne and Lexton.

8. The original "run" leased by Cpt Harrison was about 70,000 acres and by the time Valentine Nott Mogg ('Mogg') acquired the property in the early 1860's it was only 35,000 acres. Mogg is responsible for the unique brick and stone cottages and the main homestead built in the 1860's. These buildings are genuinely unique and were built facing East towards Mt Yawong to enjoy that vista. Although a leaseholder Mogg poured a fortune into the many brick and stone buildings. Mogg died in 1883 and is entombed in his own vault in the East facing cemetery just to the East of the main house.

9. As Mogg finished the grand buildings in the late 1860's the "Selection Acts" were going through the Victorian parliament. The effect of those Acts was to divide Victoria into square mile (640 acre) blocks that were available to be "selected" by those who could summon a deposit and upon "improving" the land by fencing, building etc

over the next seven years became entitled to registered title under the then new "Torrens" system of ownership by registration. By quirk of fate HCA was an early Registrar of Title in Victoria.

10. Mogg has the "preemptive right" to first select the land he had built upon. He "selected" about 3000 acres of "his" previous 35,000. The most common selection was half a square mile block or 320 acres. The potato famine of Ireland c. 1842-1850 and the exploitation of the Irish farmer by English landlords starved millions of Irish to death and destroyed that country. Part of the resultant diaspora was our great grandfather Patrick O'Shannessy of County Limerick who came to Victoria as an economic refugee and orphan aged about 9 years in the early 1860's. He worked on the Melbourne to Cope Cope railway and selected land in the 1870's at Swanwater.

11. The success of the selection Acts transformed the district. Within 10-15 years the 70,000 acres of Cpt Harrison's "run" was transformed into a thriving agricultural district with a house and family on every 320 acres. Swanwater had a large and active tennis club and social scene and strong football club leading to the three premierships of 1926-1928.

12. Our great grandfather bought the original Swanwater estate and remaining farm in 1906 and we have farmed it since. It was the matrimonial home of our grandfather "Toby" or "Tom" O'Shannessy and our grandmother Kathleen Pigeon who lived there from marriage in 1931 until "toby" died in the fire in the main house in 1967. The property passed to our father and his siblings and then to us. As children we visited the property daily, living a mile away on the corner of the Swanwater Rd and Sunraysia Hwy. Keen travellers will notice O'Shannessy Rd (that's us!) from Sunraysia Hwy (starting at the house our father built) to Lake Batyo Catyo.

13. The property is a slice of unique Australian history. The property has much joy and much grief. The traditional owners lost their land, "Toby" died there in the fire in 1967, our mother Valerie lived and worked there and died at 39 years with six children aged 14-6 months. And now, to provide power to the cities, AEMO wants to build a disfiguring power line right through the place and right through the treasured Eastern vista of Swanwater. You can imagine how we feel about the intrusion of Option 5.

14. So we still farm the land to this day and are very concerned at the impact of such a development in such a place and we hope you regard us as having an interest and standing to make this submission.

Part one: Submission overall as to scheme: destined to be soon outdated and should be underground

15. The reality is that power distribution and generation is undergoing rapid technological change. The overhead powerlines from major or centralised generators is a 19th century model. It will soon be obsolete and will have cost an absolute and unnecessary bomb that will take generations to pay for. Please don't do it. Wait. The model of the VNI is a knee jerk and not thought through reaction to the need to "do something".

16. This submission from here on is in the alternative and assumes that the day of the centralised power generation and distribution model will rightly or wrongly continue. There has been limited time to examine and respond to the detail of the Option 5 proposal. However we do not accept the broad and un-detailed assertions as to relative lesser cost of overhead as compared to in ground power.

16. This area has recently experienced the decommissioning of the Wimmera open channel system, 20,000 miles of open gravity channel water (not irrigation) for stock and home. This has recently been replaced by an underground pipe line and each farmer has many stock troughs (we have 63) fed by underground pipe line. The cost details or allegations of the VNI are not transparent but our recent widespread experience of miles and miles of underground trenching has demonstrated three things:

1. Underground trenching is doable.
2. Underground trenching is reliable with nil or minimal maintenance.
3. Underground trenching is safe.

17. The problems with reliability of high voltage overhead power lines are notorious. Witness the SA connector disaster from just an everyday storm. There will be many many more and of greater intensity due to climate change. As night follows day there will be wrecked power lines with many major storms.

18. The problems of fire safety with high voltage overhead power lines are also notorious. Please take note of the Royal Commission findings. Power lines cause fires, sooner or later. The dry nature of the path of the VNI pathway makes it particularly vulnerable to dangerous wild fires.

19. Underground will be safer and more reliable and likely cheaper in the long run. Option 5 goes through our front yard but we don't want this expensive and likely to be superseded model in anyones front yard or back yard. Please reconsider and not in a rush.

Part two: Four reasons why Option 5 at Swanwater is the wrong way to go

The Native Companions aka Brolgas

The creek along the likely path of Option 5 is habitat of the rare (and getting rarer) Australian Brolga. In the writer's lifetime they were know as "Native Companions" and were a regular feature of Swanwater and along the creek in particular. They are seen much less often. There are reported to only be 1000 left in Victoria. This is an endangered bird and needs to be protected. The scale and voltage of the Option 5 power line to run close to and parallel to their habitat will resultant in Brolga displacement during construction and death by power line contact when erected. The Option 5 is antithetical to the Swanwater Brolgas. We are concerned at the few remaining being wiped out.

The Eagles in the Plantation on the boundary of the Park

The plantation in this spot runs roughly north south and is parallel and very close to the likely path of Option 5. For many years now, the same two eagles have nested in those trees. We have endeavoured to protect them from the inaccurate belief that they prey on lambs. They don't. They prey of mice, rabbits and kangaroos (we have a plantation just for the 50-100 kangaroos that call Swanwater home). The option 5 line will endanger those eagles. They are the only two regular eagle dwellers for miles around. They must be protected.

The Sacred and Archaeological sites of traditional owner occupation along the creek

The traditional owners lived on and hunted the wild bird life of the waterways, The creek where the Option 5 will run over and parallel to will be found to be home to indigenous sites. These should not be disturbed but respected.

The destruction of the ambience and vista of historic Swanwater Homestead

I refer to and repeat the observations set out in back ground. The path of Option 5 will run through and necessarily destroy the ambience and vista of the Homestead. It will be an unnecessary tragedy.

Conclusion

Option 5 is a soon to be obsolete expensive monument to a desire to “do something”. The likely path will impact the Brolgas, the Eagles, the archaeological sites and destroy the ambience and vista of the historic Swanwater property. VNI Option 5 should not go ahead.

Patrick O’Shannessy

for O’Shannessy Brothers (Chris, Peter, Adrian and Patrick)

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P255

Name: Andrew Watts

Location: Coonooer Bridge, VIC, Australia

Submission

To whom it may concern at AEMO,

This farmer is saying no to high voltage transmission lines at Coonooer Bridge.

Concerns and impact;

- Devalue prime farming land

- Ability to farm

- Ag workers worry about health risk and will not work near lines

- Next generation wish to leave rather than live and work near lines

- Future of Agriculture is drones and unmanned equipment increasing risk near lines

- Risk to bio security and quality assurance for marketing produce and crop damage with construction and maintenance traffic

- Risk to community,

- people will leave, loss of skilled community members

- Risk to fire control with the inability to use equipment near lines

High voltage transmission lines at Coonooer Bridge will be a scar on the landscape.

Kind regards,

Andrew Watts

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P256

Name: Josephine Isaac

Location: Borung, VIC, Australia

Submission

Dear whom this may concern,

Please find attached a letter on behalf of my family regarding the latest on the proposal for the construction of Transmission lines through our land.

I thoroughly hope you read each and everyone of the letters you receive and become aware of the impacts you will bring onto the local farming community which I call my home.

If you have any further questions please don't hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards,

Josephine Isaac

Dear Whom, this may concern,

I am a farmer's daughter from the Borung with our farmlands spreading from Borung,

Fernihurst, Mysia and Wychitella. I have seen my dad farm these lands for my entire life and

have seen the ups and the downs of farming but mainly I have seen how passionate my dad is

about his farmland and puts everything he has into his work.

Our farm consists of eight-hundred hectares of Crop each year, One-thousand head of sheep

and seventy cows.

I have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a

500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes farmland that I operate a business on. I am concerned by the potential negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on my

farming operations and business.

If the transmission infrastructure was to be built on my farmland, I am concerned that I have no information on what land access arrangements could be demanded by the transmission company before, during and after construction; what costs this would have on my business; and what my rights would be.

I am also concerned that there is no information available to me about the compensation that would be provided because of the impacts on my farming operations including reduced production and decreased land values. It is therefore impossible to provide an assessment on the costs to my business if the project was constructed on my land.

Whilst I have not been provided with information that details the impact of transmission infrastructure on my farmland, I believe the following issues will impact my ability to maintain a commercial farming operation now and into the future:

- decreased land value and loss of productive capacity;
- Inability to use tractors and machinery under powerlines;
- inability to irrigate under powerlines;
- inability to utilize emerging technologies such as drones and autonomous vehicles;
- refusal to give notice or inform landholders what chemicals have been used on site causing issues with vendor declarations;
- spread of weeds;
- failure to close gates;
- damage to crops;
- materials left on site causing damage to machinery.

These impacts must be considered when evaluating the true costs and benefits of the proposed

project across all agricultural business in the region.

I believe the Victorian Government and AEMO should consider undergrounding the proposed project alongside existing transport corridors or on public land to ensure minimal disruption to farm businesses in the region.

Prior to the announcement on 20 February 2023 that the corridor for the VNI West project would change, I had no knowledge of the proposed project and no understanding of it potentially impacting my farm business. I believe the community needs more time to respond to this project so a more accurate assessment of its costs and benefits can be made.

If these transmission lines are going to go up through our paddocks, what do we do with our livestock whilst they are in the construction phase? We can't simply move them to other paddocks because they are our cropping paddocks therefore, we would lose money, which where are we going to get this money from. Our farm survived the drought, but we are unsure we can survive this and come out better before.

I am also a teacher at the local small school where a vast majority of my students come from farming backgrounds, I don't want to see this impact their learning or their future. Just think about other possible solutions that won't impact the lives of many people I know.

Josephine Isaac, Borung Victoria

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P257

Name: Stacey Keller

Location: Sutherland, VIC, Australia

Submission

April 2023

Dear Australian Energy Market Operator,

RE: VNI West – Proposed Route 5

I have become aware of the VNI West proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana in Victoria to New South Wales.

My partner's family farm, and the farms of extended family and friends span across and are located within the Buloke, Loddon and Northern Grampians Shires – all which fall in the proposed corridor of Route 5, and so I write as a concerned partner, family member, neighbour and friend.

Having attended the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) organised forums in St Arnaud and Wedderburn, we continue to remain with more questions than answers as appearances and answers from AEMO representatives were non-existent.

- Where exactly is the route going to be? A 50km wide patch on a map gives no clear indication.
- How will the construction and running of these towers impact farmable land? How many hectares will be lost? And at a cost to who? Suggested compensation figures seem extremely minimal.

- What are the health and safety risks associated with farming near these towers and what measures are in place should something go wrong?
- In a time when biosecurity risks are increasing, what measures are in place to ensure our farm remains safe and free of potentially devastating disease?
- What sort of an eyesore are these towers going to bring to our picturesque environments?

How are we to attract new residents to ensure our communities continue to thrive? “We love a sunburnt country, a land of sweeping plains. Not of transmission towers tearing through our cereals and grains.”

And the biggest question for me as a healthcare worker – what is the impact going to be on the mental health of my loved ones? Not only now, but also our future generations.

Mental ill-health and suicide rates among rural farming communities is already far too high. In Australia, male farmers die by suicide at rates significantly higher than the general population and non-farming rural males (Beyond Blue).

Since news broke of these transmission lines, we have already begun to see the short-term mental health impacts, with a significant shift in the mood amongst my loved ones. I cannot count the number of phone calls, text messages and conversations that have been exchanged. And the tone of these conversations has certainly changed. There’s heightened worry and concern, scared about what this project will do. Farmers stereotypically known to show no emotion, are showing emotion loud and clear and it’s concerning. So how long will we be tormented with the project and how long will mental ill-health snowball before, and I feel nauseated at even writing it, the worst happens and we have to say goodbye to a loved one? The utter negligence you at AEMO have shown towards the mental health of affected communities is horrendous. We are people. We are people working hard to provide food and fibre for our country. We deserve to be treated better.

Heads are spinning as we try to understand what minimal information you are giving us, comparing this to the hear-say that is around, as well to the recent report written by highly accomplished Professors saying this will all be a “monumental mistake”. How are we to know what is right and what is wrong? How are we to make an informed judgement about these large projects? Have these concerns even been considered by yourselves at AEMO? Put yourselves in our shoes. If it was your family and friend’s livelihoods at stake, you’d do anything to protect them. Same goes in the country. We are a small but mighty community, and we look out for our mates and neighbours. I urge the powers to be at AEMO to provide the community more time to be consulted with and respond to this project so a more accurate assessment of its true costs and any benefits can be made, and answers to our questions given. As it stands, the proposed route through Loddon, Buloke and Northern Grampians Shires is not suitable. I am firmly against this current proposed route.

Stacey Keller

Partner of 6th generation sheep and grain farmer | Sutherland, Victoria

Daughter of 4th generation sheep and grain farmer | Wedderburn, Victoria

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P258

Name: Ebony Watts

Location: Charlton, VIC, Australia

Submission

To whom it may concern,

I have lived in the Charlton community as the partner of a farmer for around 10 years. In that time I have experienced drought, mouse plagues, locusts plagues and multiple floods. The flooding was so severe that we were cut off from surrounding towns for days at a time. Farming has been challenging enough. The consequences and mental toll of putting everything on the line to receive nothing in return is well documented. There is a high rate of suicide amongst farmers. This lifestyle is challenging enough without the introduction of yet another challenge, high 80 meter power lines cutting through the heart of our farm. The thought is devastating. It would be pointless for me to repeat to you all of the complications that you know will handicap our ability to farm out land successfully with as you already know what they are. These will turn families away from farming. It will devastate out small community. The town will suffer. The population will dwindle.

I don't believe that option 5 has been adequately thought through. As mentioned earlier- we are a community that is susceptible to flooding, how would you maintain powerlines when you cannot access the town?

I object to this project on the bases that AusNet have been found negligible in the past, the track record suggests that they cannot maintain their powerlines adequately and their incompetence was found the cause of the devastating Kinglake fires. They will put out community at risk.

I object for the environment, the negative impact that there 80 meter powerlines will have on our native flora and fauna. My husbands family has cared for this land for 6 generations and my sons will be the 7th. I object to the powerlines because on the impact they will have on tourism. People are attracted to our community because it's quiet and peaceful, 80 meter powerlines cutting through the middle of our community- not so picturesque!

I hope you listen to the experts, such as professor Bruce Mountain- who has repeatedly said that this project isn't the answer to Victoria power problems. I can only hope you see that this isn't the answer because I cannot stomach the thought of this project proceeding.

Regards, Ebony Watts

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P259

Name: Brad McDonald

Location: Sutherland, VIC, Australia

Submission

April 2023

Submission on VNI WEST Transmission line.

AEMO, YOU, YOUR CONSULTATION AND YOUR VNI WEST PROPOSAL ARE A DISGRACE!

I have only recently become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a massive 500KV transmission line from Bulgana to NSW which will impact on my local community.

Furthermore, due to the pathetic consultation from AEMO option 5 is potentially going to impact directly on my family's farming property as it lies within the 50km wide blob on the map.

There is already significant angst amongst the community due to the unknown. The greater impact

on how proposal 5 will affect the community is anybody's guess as AEMO HAS NOT provided any

detailed information on this transmission line. The community pop up information sessions and

webinars ran by AEMO were poorly advertised and ran with no clear answers forthcoming. The

"farming and electricity transmission fast facts" page which was emailed to me from AEMO the

afternoon before submissions were initially due to close on April 5 is further proof AEMO have no

intention of providing clear and timely facts about this proposal. The fact sheet contains very vague

dialogue to essentially tell the readers nothing. How does a company entrusted with a multi-billion dollar project think this is acceptable consultation with people whose livelihoods and health are at

stake? Affected communities need some solid facts on the project so they can make an informed

decision on its pros and cons. Additionally the affected communities deserve the common courtesy of AEMO representatives to actually show up to community consultation meetings on these transmission lines. The no show from AEMO and Transgrid at the community meeting they had agreed to attend in St Arnaud on the 17th of April, is a classic example of their disrespect to the people in my community. What better way to engage in consultation than at a community meeting???

I believe the negative impacts from proposal 5 through the Northern Grampians, Buloke and Loddon Shire Councils far outweigh any potential benefits to the community. As a farmer I fear that potentially having these massive towers cut through this districts broadacre farmland only has detrimental impacts on the safety and future wellbeing of the broader community, not just my family. For an individual having a transmission line dissect your property it will have serious financial, health and safety risks for their existing farming operation.

Some of these being in relation to:

- Production losses from transmission towers, easements, and access roads.
- Disruptions to current and future farming practices and technology
- Biosecurity and animal welfare
- Fire risk
- Communication interference
- Increased insurance premiums
- Mental and physical health concerns
- Environmental degradation
- Visual eyesore
- Aircraft and drone usage restrictions

- Machinery inefficiency

These impacts must be explored and researched fully before the true cost and any net benefit or deficit of this project are calculated. In this ever-uncertain world we live in at the moment it is curious that AEMO can actually be quoting a cost and then net benefits of this project when so many details are unknown.

The Victorian government and AEMO should not be rushing the closure of coal fired power stations until a suitable reliable all-weather alternative is found. It's all well and good thinking wind, solar and hydro are the answer, but where is the electricity going to come from in the next drought on a calm night??? Rushing transmission lines through prime agricultural communities to pump water uphill from a windfarm 700kms away to try and make wind and solar reliable is not the answer. There must be greater scrutiny on the need for new transmission projects as upgrades to existing transmission infrastructure may be sufficient. Furthermore, the location of future renewable power generation projects needs to be carefully planned to ensure they are closer to the end user so these monumental transmission mistakes will not ruin the countryside.

VNI West proposal 5 is NOT going to divide my farm or community. We will stand together to fight this.

Brad McDonald

6th Generation sheep and grain farmer.

Sutherland, Victoria

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P260

Name: Rowena Watts

Location: Coonooer Bridge, VIC, Australia

Submission

To whom it may concern at AEMO,

This farmer is saying no to high voltage transmission lines at Coonooer Bridge.

Concerns and impact;

- Devalue prime farming land

-Ability to farm

- Ag workers worry about health risk and will not work near lines

-Next generation wish to leave rather than live and work near lines

-Future of Agriculture is drones and unmanned equipment increasing risk near lines

-Risk to bio security and quality assurance for marketing produce and crop damage with construction and maintenance traffic

-Risk to community,

-people will leave, loss of skilled community members

-Risk to fire control with the inability to use equipment near lines

High voltage transmission lines at Coonooer Bridge will be a scar on the landscape.

Kind regards,

Rowena Watts

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P261

Name: Alister Watts

Location: Coonooer Bridge, VIC, Australia

Submission

To whom it may concern at AEMO,

This farmer is saying no to high voltage transmission lines at Coonooer Bridge.

Concerns and impact;

- Devalue prime farming land

- Ability to farm

- Ag workers worry about health risk and will not work near lines

- Next generation wish to leave rather than live and work near lines

- Future of Agriculture is drones and unmanned equipment increasing risk near lines

- Risk to bio security and quality assurance for marketing produce and crop damage with construction and maintenance traffic

- Risk to community,

- people will leave, loss of skilled community members

- Risk to fire control with the inability to use equipment near lines

High voltage transmission lines at Coonooer Bridge will be a scar on the landscape.

Kind regards,

Alister Watts

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P262

Name: Peter & Carolyn McHugh

Location: Wedderburn, VIC, Australia

Submission

April 18th, 2023

Submission to AEMO by Peter and Carolyn McHugh regarding the proposed VNI West Transmission Line

To whom it may concern,

We own a 500 hectare mixed cropping and livestock farm west of Wedderburn that may be impacted by the proposed 500kv transmission lines. The farm has been in the McHugh family ownership for 3 generations and we are deeply connected to our land.

We have found the lack of information sharing about this project by AEMO is not at all adequate, with very little detail supplied to the farming community about it, in any type of effective manner. It is only by the actions of a concerned few citizens and the VFF in publicising it, that we have been able to access information. Why has AEMO not at least done a letter drop to all those farmers in the proposed zone? Apart from an offer of \$8000 per kilometre of towers on individual properties, which is woefully inadequate, there is no mention of compensation to those farmers for reduced land value or for those within sight of these steel monstrosities spoiling their quiet enjoyment of their surroundings.

There have been no information shared about access to our property, and the implications to our farm bio security before, during and after the proposed construction of these towers. This is a major issue for us, with such issues as inability to use machines under these lines, notice of chemical use by AEMO/Transgrid, spread of weeds, closing of gates by workers, damage to crops and roads are all factors that have not been discussed with us to ease our concerns.

We are deeply committed to conservation and the environment, having built over 100 acres of fenced-off wildlife corridors of biodiversity on our farm as part of our work with Bush Heritage and also utilising a National Heritage Trust grant. This series of corridors links two separated sections of the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve. The purpose of these corridors, along with other farmer corridors, going from north of Donald to south of

Wedderburn, is to give bird life the chance to transition safely over time to cooler climates as climate change occurs, saving many endangered species of bird from extinction.

The construction of these towers by destroying habitat and providing a hazard to bird life would negate the effects of this work we have been committed to over many years. Our property itself has a strong tree coverage out of these corridors as we have always farmed in a sustainable way over the generations.

We believe that the actual plan to build these towers is based on a fatally flawed premise. It is based on the intra state model which has worked with coal energy generation and the sale and movement of electricity across large distances between states, which AEMO was originally set up to facilitate.

However, now that solar and wind generation is much more affordable and the cost of transmission is so high, AEMO should consider the work of Professors Bruce Mountain and Simon Bartlett with their extensive study and knowledge in this field and utilise their solutions, which reflect the current state of renewable energy and associated costs/benefits.

This model has naturally occurring local and regional 'hubs' of renewable energy in logical places serving specific areas, such as wind (onshore and offshore) at Portland and Gippsland, solar in Mildura/Sunraysia area, and combinations of solar/wind in other areas. The current distribution system should be utilised and batteries used for backup.

Instead of spending billions of dollars on transmission lines around the country with all the associated disastrous environmental and social costs, the above option would be flexible and sustainable and much, much more friendly to the environment, to Australia's energy security, to Australia's budget and keep our communities intact, rather than destroy them.

We ask that AEMO put much more rigorous thinking into the actual assumptions underlying and shaping their proposed tower system and for the sake of our country's future and quality of life for all, come up with a much more feasible system to combat the current climate issues.

Yours sincerely,

Peter and Carolyn McHugh

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P263

Name: Rachel & Tom Jackson

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

To those at AEMO,

I am writing to you to express my, and my family's, passionate disapproval of the proposed VNI West Project.

We are a part of a 5th generation mixed farming operation near St Arnaud, and are active members of the local community.

The VNI West Project will have a significant negative impact on our farming operation, day to day life, community, and future. Jeopardising both economic and social wellbeing. As numerous other farming businesses will also be impacted, it will have a huge flow on effect to the primary production of our state.

There has been very little information provided to us and the community about the proposed project and any consultation non-existent. Furthermore to this impact the project would have, we also believe it is not right for the security, sustainability, and future of energy in this state and country.

We are aware of the VNI-West Consultation Report by Professor Bruce Mountain & Professor Simon Bartlett. We believe the information and findings in this report to be true and accurate.

Any progress on this project needs to be stopped immediately, the public need to be better informed, and time needs to be taken to properly assess the feasibility.

Sincerely,

Rachel & Tom Jackson

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P267

Name: Nathan & Kristen Gooding

Location: Wychitella, VIC, Australia

Submission

As third generational farmers in the Wychitella/Mysia area- this is a disgrace! With all the ups and downs farmers have had to go through over the past upteen years, the mental health toll is huge.... farmers and families can't take any more hits!

Go underground....

Life on the land is pretty good, we have our challenges but overall, we love what we do; there is an enormous amount of job satisfaction when we get things right.

Like all farmers, we work hard, we put in long hours in a self-employed occupation that's a gamble. With a gamble comes risks, stress, sleepless nights and mental health issues. Much of this goes unseen as farmers are the great pretenders. Farmers make passing comments such as, "she'll be right mate;" "it'll work out;" "it will be what it will be!" This attitude has helped us through many tough times but maybe it's time to get tough

Many questions are being raised by farmers regarding the health risks, land loss due to easements, increased fire dangers, limitations of machinery use, restrictions of irrigation and devaluation of land. Answers to these pressing and prevailing questions are not being provided by AEMO. It is our valuable farmland; surely, we deserve transparent and accurate answers to our concerns. There is fear and frustration circulating amongst the farmers with many expressing that not one dollar of compensation will be worth the negative effects.

Common sense needs to prevail..

Nathan & Kristen Gooding

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P269

Name: Bronwyn Simpson

Location:

Submission

I wish to strongly object to your proposed Option 5 of the 50kV transmission lines which will pass through our community.

These lines should not come at the cost of our community after your previous proposals have been found wanting.

Broad acre farming means that we are not as densely populated as other areas that you have considered but non the less we are passionate custodians of the land which provides wholesome produce to the people of this nation as well as many others through Australia's export markets. To jeopardise these markets is short sighted. Our farmers struggle through the tempests of nature and fluctuations in the markets and this proposed high voltage power line will be a constant threat for generations to come.

Clean green energy to New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory should not come at the cost of our farming practices. Our farmers strive to enhance their custodianship of our land by continually improving their farming methods and the construction of this massive undertaking to move power from Victoria into NSW and the ACT will place extra burdens on our rural communities to survive.

Why are you not able to link into existing lines which already transverse our state from the coal powered power stations which are being decommissioned and replaced with renewable energy.

Furthermore I believe that if NSW needs this volume of power into the future then they should and could provide this from their own back yards.

Yours sincerely

Bronwyn Simpson

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P270

Name: Aaron Sanderson

Location: Coonooer Bridge, VIC, Australia

Submission

The Coonooer Bridge Community Group is a passionate group comprising of members who reside in the area, mostly who operate their own agricultural primary production businesses.

We have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes the land of our community, farmland that we reside and operate our businesses on. We have informed ourselves on what is currently proposed within this project and we have major issues associated.

Our issues are;

- The economic impact of devaluing land could have disastrous effects on local agricultural businesses that use their land values as equity to fund operating & machinery loans. Agricultural business are asset rich and cash poor; in devaluing land the banks would not be able to approve these loans making operating successful business near impossible or it would cause banks to recall current loans that would bankrupt farmers.
- Our local Coonooer Bridge CFA fire station is solely run by volunteers. With the additional restrictions and dangers associated while fighting fires in the vicinity of transmission lines; we will lose many of these much-needed volunteers. This puts our personal safety and that of our land and stock in danger especially during fire periods. Fires being a regular occurrence especially in the summer months with lightning strikes in crops and while harvesting, as crop stubble & hay is highly combustible. The CFA operating procedures clearly prohibit any CFA volunteers from fighting fires on transmission lines and that ESV prohibit any aerial activity on or near easements.
- Our community at Coonooer Bridge have seen too many floods in the past few years, the last being only a few months ago. As a community we hold grave concerns to our safety once one of these floods is coupled with the proposed electric transmissions lines. Infrastructure is both incompatible with large volumes of water and is

uninsurable. Any damage done by the frequent storms and severe weather in our region has to be passed back to energy consumers.

- Biosecurity is a big concern given that Coonooer Bridge has a large number of livestock present and livestock businesses including intensive operations. The concern is with people unknown entering our land.
- Coonooer Bridge agribusinesses are proud and passionate producers of food and fiber. Loss of productivity on prime farmland within the area will not only be a dramatic detriment to their businesses now but also into the future.
- There are concerns that the close proximity to transmission lines would lead to losses with livestock due to the potential health risks associated. Reports from farmers who are unfortunate enough to have transmission lines built nearby, have witnessed low birth rates and other health issues with their stock.
- With the latest survey data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics finding the average farmer is 56 years-old; this being 17 years older than the average Australian worker. This fact along with the increase in average farm size means that agriculture as an industry is having to develop new technology. GPS is a standard practice and drones and automated machinery is becoming increasingly vital in our businesses, not being able to use these technologies would greatly weaken our businesses and put us at a disadvantage in a rapidly technology advancing industry.
- Limited Aerial spraying. Spraying and spreading via helicopter or aeroplane are commonly used to manage crop and pasture health, particularly in wet conditions when heavy machinery can damage soil structure or risk becoming bogged. We are led to believe that any aerial activities are prohibited on transmission line easements.
- Health concerns because of the unknown.
- Effects with retaining and promoting the next generation. Farming has enough obstacles that it faces daily that is out of our control, trying to retain and prosper the next generation is hard enough without additional impacts, red tape and restrictions that transmission lines throw into the mix. The risk of losing more current and potential farmers puts the country's food security at risk.
- Having transmission lines rip through our area could be the end of our tight knit community that has been imperative to us for the last 150 years. Where the towers lie could end up pitting neighbors against each other, create divisions in the community and destroy its social fabric with the effect of removing the mental health support mechanism for a very vulnerable and isolated portion of the population.
- Concerns regarding emergency services within the area especially in regards to air ambulance service and fire-bombing for fire control.

- Tourism has become part of our community. We have just completed restoration of our rare 1878 muzzle loading cannon that is placed next to our own war memorial cenotaph. This honors all the locals that sacrificed so much for our freedom and for what we have today. We feel that the visual outlook of transmission towers would not only diminish the tourism prospects but also greatly disrespect the individuals who are named on this memorial.

Prior to the announcement on 20 February 2023 that the corridor for the VNI West project would change, we had no knowledge of the proposed project and no understanding of it potentially impacting our community and farming businesses. Since researching further and informing ourselves we are now of the strong believe that this project will bring nothing but dire consequences to our community and surrounding businesses and families.

We believe the Victorian Government and AEMO should reconsider any proposed transmission line project through our community as we object.

Written by Aaron Sanderson (VFF Member) - Coonooer Bridge Community Group.

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P271

Name: Jack Wilson

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

No to St Arnaud interconnector

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P272

Name: Dorothy Patton

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

Please add our objection and dismay to the list of people in the Wimmera to your plan to create a huge easement across some Victoria's most productive farming land with power to have a permanent harmful and negative affect on all farming practices.

How can we plan for such an uncertain future in farming when this wrecking of our paddocks, our environment and possibly our health is what we face?

Please explore other options that do not rely on already dated technology to wreck our landscape permanently and destroy the hopes of future generations of farmers.

Des and Dorothy Patton

St arnaud

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P273

Name: Peter & Monica Martin

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

Hi would like to express our NO to option 5... We do not want powerline on our farm land in St Arnaud or Charlton for that matter... SO NO TO AEMO OPTION 5... Kind regards Peter and, Monica Martin St Arnaud

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P274

Name: Joe Lockhart

Location: Berrimal, VIC, Australia

Submission

Hi,

I'm on a mixed enterprise farm of sheep and cropping in Berrimal 15 minutes south west of Wedderburn. Growing wheat, barley, canola and lupins, we run merino sheep and produce first cross lambs for the meat market. Listed in the following paragraphs are concerns that I strongly believe in, please listen to communities that will be negatively impacted as we deserve our voice.

The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes farmland that I operate a business on. I am concerned by the potential negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on my farming operations and business.

If the transmission infrastructure was to be built on my farmland, I am concerned that I have no information on what land access arrangements could be demanded by the transmission company before, during and after construction; what costs this would have on my business; and what my rights would be.

I am also concerned that there is no information available to me about the compensation that would be provided because of the impacts on my farming operations including reduced production and decreased land values. It is therefore impossible to provide an assessment on the costs to my business if the project was constructed on my land.

Whilst I have not been provided with information that details the impact of transmission infrastructure on my farmland, I believe the following issues will impact my ability to maintain a commercial farming operation now and into the future:

- decreased land value and loss of productive capacity;
- Inability to use tractors and machinery under powerlines;
- inability to irrigate under powerlines;
- inability to utilize emerging technologies such as drones and autonomous vehicles;
- refusal to give notice or inform landholders what chemicals have been used on site causing issues with vendor declarations;
- spread of weeds;
- failure to close gates;
- damage to crops;
- materials left on site causing damage to machinery.

These impacts must be considered when evaluating the true costs and benefits of the proposed project across all agricultural business in the region.

I believe the Victorian Government and AEMO should consider undergrounding the proposed project alongside existing transport corridors or on public land to ensure minimal disruption to farm businesses in the region.

Prior to the announcement on 20 February 2023 that the corridor for the VNI West project would change, I had no knowledge of the proposed project and no understanding of it potentially impacting my farm business. I believe the community needs more time to respond to this project so a more accurate assessment of its costs and benefits can be made.

Regards Joe Lockhart, Berrimal.

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P275

Name: Ash & Rosalyn Gawne

Location: Boort, VIC, Australia

Submission

My husband and I are located 10 km from the northern Victorian town of Boort. We currently crop approximately 800 acres and have 1000 breeding merino ewes. We are extremely concerned about the proposed overhead transmission line and that it may include farmland that we operate our business on.

If the transmission infrastructure was to be built on my farmland, I am concerned that I have no information on what land access arrangements could be demanded by the transmission company before, during and after construction; what costs this would have on my business; and what my rights would be.

I am also concerned that there is no information available to me about the compensation that would be provided because of the impacts on my farming operations including reduced production and decreased land values. It is therefore impossible to provide an assessment on the costs to my business if the project was constructed on my land,

Whilst I have not been provided with information that details the impact of transmission infrastructure on my farmland, I believe the following issues will impact my ability to maintain a commercial farming operation now and into the future:

- decreased land value and loss of productive capacity; • Inability to use tractors and machinery under power lines; • inability to irrigate under power lines;
- inability to utilize emerging technologies such as drones and autonomous vehicles;
- refusal to give notice or inform landholders what chemicals have been used on site causing issues with vendor declarations; • spread of weeds;
- failure to close gates;
- damage to crops; • materials left on site causing damage to machinery.

These impacts must be considered when evaluating the true costs and benefits of the proposed project across all agricultural businesses in the region. I believe the Victorian Government and AEMO should consider undergrounding the proposed project alongside existing transport corridors or on public land to ensure minimal disruption to farm businesses in the region.

Prior to the announcement on 20 February 2023 that the corridor for the VNI West project would change, I had no knowledge of the proposed project and no understanding of it potentially impacting my farm business. I believe the community needs more time to respond to this project so a more accurate assessment of its costs and benefits can be made.

Ash & Ros Gawne (Boort)

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P277

Name: Matthew McNally

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

18/4/2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you to convey my disappointment in the news that AEMO and the Victorian Government are proposing to build a 500kv double circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

We are a 5th generation family farming at St.Arnaud and Boort and have land that is in the proposed transmission corridor.

This proposed line will have a significant impact on our family farming business, through impacts that would be created by an easement including fire, biosecurity, access issues, the loss of valuable farming land and the inability to irrigate under transmission lines. We have spent a significant amount of time and money to improve our farm to make it into a sustainable, diverse and resilient business that is efficient through the careful layout of fencing and irrigation infrastructure. All of this would be put in jeopardy if these powerlines are to be constructed.

Not to mention the immense mental health pressures that are forced onto our family and the general community through the Victorian Government and AEMO's failure to disclose any meaningful information on this project. The total lack of respect and disregard of the community is evident by AEMO's failure to answer questions from the community. This shows that there are floors in this project, otherwise one would be happy to discuss this project and answer questions put to them in good faith.

AEMO's failure to turn up to the St.Arnaud Community Forum/Information Session on 17/4/2023 highlighted this, with AEMO and Transgrid being a NO SHOW. The positive in this being that the over 330 people that attended got to hear a few facts about AEMO and the proposed transmission line from Professor Bruce Mountain. AEMO should read Professor Bruce Mountain and Professor Simon Bartlett AM 's submission at – <http://www.vepc.org.au/> to see how they believe that this VNI West project is a "MONUMENTAL MISTAKE".

In conclusion I believe that the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales should be halted immediately, as this project is being rushed through unnecessarily and without foresight.

Yours sincerely

Matthew McNally

-On behalf of the McNally Family and Traverston Farming Pty Ltd

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P278

Name: Declan Eyles

Location: [Unidentified]

Submission

To whom it may concern

Hearing about the potential plans for the new transmission lines from Dinawan to Bulgana via Kerang has left me feeling wronged.

In the report Project Update 6 it states that the project is expected to generate AUD\$1.4 billion in net benefits, but fails to recognise the consequences for the main stakeholders. Those being landowners and traditional custodians, who will be losing access to valuable, productive, and culturally significant land

This report does link to the larger consultation report for more information on the subject. Looking at the multi-criteria analysis performed in this report it is evident that little consideration was directed towards anything bar the financial benefit involved in the project. With impacts on all stakeholders only adding up to a grand total of 25% of the considerations, with 5% going to engineering concerns and a whopping 70% going to maximising the economic benefits.

Surely if the project is expected to generate \$1.4billion in net benefits more consideration can be taken for the impacts on local communities, environment and the future of the area.

Regards,

Declan Eyles.

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P279

Name: Patricia Hines

Location: Bolangum, VIC, Australia

Submission

Dear AEMO Directors

I am registering myself and my family ,to object to the proposal for VNI West transmission power lines in the Northern Grampians Shire .

I believe Australia is an open and Democratic country , and you have shown none of these attributions.

You have to be open and honest in helping to make decision . You have shown none of these .

You have to engage people and bring your ideas forward and bring outcomes for both parties.

You will rob Peter to pay Paul ,in your quest to save the planet, to limit green house gas . Please consider the families that farm in your proposed transmission area.

Some Professors of energy movement say there are better ways of moving energy ,and this proposal is not the best way to do it .

I believe you will gain to make a lot of money ,and we farming the land will be disadvantaged .There will be no winners .

I can only ask that you reconsider your proposal and consider the families that live in Rural Victoria .

Yours respectfully and sincerely .

Farm manager of Northern Grampians Bolangum Warngar area .

Leigh Hines, Patricia Hines, Matthew Hines, Amy McLennan, Benjamin Hines, Patricia Hines

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P280

Name: Amy Twigg

Location: Melbourne, VIC, Australia

Submission

Dear whoever this may concern,

I feel very strongly against the transmission lines that will be going up on western Victoria.

I live in Melbourne and spend my weekends hiking and boldering at the Granites and nearby areas. This eye sore would ruin the tranquility of the natural space and increase fires. Making my visits more dangerous and less fulfilling. Over the time I have been visiting I have come to appreciate the wonderful local community which would be disrupted. This beautiful community is already vulnerable and these power lines would add detrimentally to their lives and the lives of tourists like me.

Regards

Amy Twigg-Edwards

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P281

Name: Andrew Edwards

Location: Brunswick, VIC, Australia

Submission

Hi, i am a business analyst living in Brunswick 3057. I enjoy traveling and visiting the granites near Mysia. I strongly oppose running large power lines thru this area. It will split the community, the lines should be run underground.

Thanks you

Andrew Edwards

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P282

Name: Louise Marland

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

I am born and bred local of St. Arnaud I have recently been made aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line that will be destroying out town and community. I am completely against the proposal. I work in the agricultural industry and know how hard the men and women work to provide food and fibre for the country. These lines are going to ruin the pristine farmland that generation have worked so hard for by spreading, disease, pests and weeds and if you can't see that your complete idiots. They are going to wreak havoc over summer with bushfire and access for the volunteer CFA who are farmers whose land you will be destroying. The environmental impact to our native wildlife has that even been considered by AEMO? Do you not think we have native wildlife on our farms? Without our farmers our we are a ghost town, St Arnaud is only here because of Agriculture, my whole family relies on the local Agriculture. My parents own land that is mark on your map of destruction, they have work like dogs to get something for their retirement and you think you have the right to take that away!!!! Option 5 will not happen in this community, we are a strong active community, we will not stop fighting!!

NO GO AEMO!!

COUNTRY PAIN CITY GAIN!!

NO FARMERS NO FOOD!!

Louise Marland

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P283

Name: Nathan McIntyre

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

TO AEMO REPRESENTATIVE

I am a St. Arnaud resident and I am very disappointed at the way the proposed transmission line option 5 has been introduced without a care in the world for our Farming Families and Local People by Sneakily pushing it through.

The Food Source from Cropping will be Greatly Reduced to Feed People and Animals as a Great Amount of Prime Farming Ground will be Unusable which will Create a Knock-On Effect for Farming Income, Business's which will effect the quality of wellbeing for thousands of people and Employment which will LEAD TO UNEMPLOYMENT.

It will cause significant impacts on the Environment and Cost of Living which will Effect Every Single Person and Animal.

It's unnecessary so waste millions of tax payers money, at the current time it will work, 10-20+ years it will not.

Look at Germany. Looks at the mess they have created. It has cost them ten fold extra by trying to achieve what you's are trying to do.

So why bother doing it? Just stupidity.

Our Farming Ground will DEPRECIATE, the area will go backwards. The housing will devalue. Living and living out in the back bone of Australia will suffer. The country people are the back bone of the country. Not the city but that's all you think about! Who will want to Buy Good Prime Farming Ground that a chunk is Unusable for Cropping, which would impact on your Income.

And who wants to be buying ground that has ugly Monstrous, Eye Sores running through your Prime Food Source that feeds the World.

NO ONE.

This will cause DEPRESSION and SUICIDE'S in the Farming Family.

THESE LINES SHOULD BE PUT UNDER GROUND SO THERE IS NOT SUCH A BIG IMPACT ON PEOPLE'S AND ANIMALS LIVE'S AND LIVELIHOOD.

MAKES SENSE.

And that has been done in areas

IF THAT'S NOT VIABLE, THEN WE DON'T WANT THEM, WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN HEAPS OF LIES, GOVERNMENT NOT TELLING US THE TRUTH, JUST WASTING TAX PAYER'S MONEY, TO PLEASE CERTAIN PEOPLE.

ALSO IT SAY'S ALOT ABOUT YOU'S WHEN YOU'S COULDN'T EVEN SHOW YOUR FACES YESTERDAY AT THE TOWN MEETING HERE, VERY DISAPPOINTING.

YOU DONT HAVE THE BACKBONE TO TURN UP AND SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE THAT WILL BE EFFECT AND HEAR OUR VOICE BUT ALSO GIVE YOU TYR OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE US YOUT VIEWS, SO WHY WOULD WE WANT A BAR OF IT!

WE SAY NO TO YOUR POWERLINES, NOT HERE, NOT IN OUR COMMUNITY!

REGARDS

Nathan McIntyre

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P284

Name: Etira Seehusen

Location: Marnoo, VIC, Australia

Submission

VNI west powerline transmission Submission

I have only just become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a power transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The pink blob on the map for this proposed transmission line includes farmland through my district. I am concerned by the detrimental negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on my health and the highly agricultural ran community that I live in.

We have not had any questions answered basically no consultation. 3 people out the front of the local town hall, who can't even answer a question as simple as how tall the towers are, is just not consultation at all.

- Can't fight fires underlines!! Just stupidity in the modern error of technology.
- What happens to the heritage sites!
- What happens to the cultural background!
- What happens to the towers when they condemn them?
- Where's the concrete in the ground go!
- Only to name a few of the basic destructive complications that the powerlines will have on the people who have to work and live with them!

- Everybody needs to be made aware of the social and environmental impacts that this will bring into the community.

- THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE. AND THE PEOPLE TO COME!

From a CFA point of view, if fires can't be fought near or under the transmission lines, it could burn acres and acres before it is brought under control.... We don't want another Black Saturday do we? This could claim the lives and homes of many vulnerable people and animals again!

I believe as a resident that option 5 isn't the answer for renewable energy transmission lines the Victorian Government and AEMO must put the lines underground along existing transport corridors not on highly productive farm land. That will rip communities and families apart.

I think it's disgusting the way you are just trying to railroad through the farmers land who primarily feed us. If you reckon you can, think again because our people are not the weakest link... This is just wasting everyone's time!! These powerlines are not being erected under any circumstance within the community I live in!!!

Name: Etira Seehusen

Location: Marnoo

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P285

Name: David Cossar

Location: Yeungroon, VIC, Australia

Submission

SUBMISSION TO THE VNI WEST - CONSULTATION REPORT

It wasn't ^{until} the announcement on 20th Feb 2023 of the proposed corridor for the VNI West project that it would be coming through our region. The information since has been misleading, lacking transparency and totally insufficient to have any trust in the proposal.

Our family now with fourth, fifth and sixth generation, continue to farm in this region since the late 1800's. Each generation has strived to improve and implement practices that ~~are~~ environmentally friendly. Modern practices have arrested and eliminated both water & wind erosion, successfully regenerated ~~the~~ the native buloke trees (now on the endangered species list), embraced a ~~and~~ cultural overlay granted in 1986. We have survived droughts, massive floods, plagues of mice and grasshoppers and recovered from bush fires.

It takes resilience and a love and passion for the land and environment to prosper and be sustainable in our region.

The proposed project of transmission lines will have a ~~that~~ massive influence of distracting many community ~~and~~ which will by far out weight the benefits.

I strongly object to its construction in its current form and will not accept Option 5.

David Cossar - YEUNGROON - BULOKE SHIRE