

**Submission
No 136**

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY
ZONES (REZ) ON RURAL AND REGIONAL
COMMUNITIES AND INDUSTRIES IN NEW SOUTH
WALES**

Name: Mr Tim White
Date Received: 19 November 2024

I am writing to express my deep concern over the placement of new transmission lines from the New England Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) through Chaffey Dam, Duncans Creek, Dungowan, Garoo, Loomberah, Mulla Creek and Woolomin.

My family & i live and work on

. We own and operate a mixed farming business that is vertically integrated with a retail butchery and food production business in Sydney.

I want you to understand the impact of the planned lines on the quality of my life, and those in my community as well as the numerous tourists we have each year, and on the livelihoods of other local farmers.

The impact to our community are as follows (but not limited to) :

Visual blight and property value concerns:

- The massive scale of HVTLs creates a significant visual intrusion on the natural beauty of our rural landscape. This negatively impacts the tourism industry, including established businesses in Woolomin Village, Dungowan Brewery and boutique accommodation providers.
- Property values in the vicinity of the proposed route are likely to plummet due to the visual blight and associated concerns. 2 larger properties that have listed since the lines were announced have failed to generate any bids at all!

Health Concerns:

- Residents are deeply worried about potential health risks associated with electromagnetic fields (EMFs) emitted by HVTLs. While the science on long-term health effects is inconclusive, the potential for negative impacts on residents' & Livestock well-being cannot be ignored.
- Mental health issues due to stress within the community are unnecessarily increased due to the uncertainty, short time frame & aggressive bullying tactics used by EnergyCo representatives.

Environmental Impact:

- Construction of the HVTLs will disrupt and potentially destroy critical habitat for native flora and fauna, including threatened species like koalas (largest inland community in NSW), platypus, and the rare Booroolong frog.
- The project poses a serious threat to the delicate ecosystems of the region.

Lack of Consultation and Shortened Response Time:

- The community feels there has been a lack of meaningful consultation from EnergyCo throughout the planning stages of the HVTL project. There has been ZERO social license shown in this process. EnergyCo representatives have constantly made a mockery of the system they work within.

Farming Impact:

- The HVTLs will significantly disrupt farming practices.
- Precision farming methods, essential for modern precision agriculture (GPS guidance), will be rendered unusable in close proximity to the power lines.
- Lower livestock carrying capacity due to reduced pasture quality and the inability to use aerial fertilisation.
- Construction, estimated at five years, will cause major disruptions to established farming & breeding operations.

Bushfire and Biosecurity Concerns:

- The Rural Fire Service WILL NOT fight fires in or near the HVTL easement corridor due to arcing risks, jeopardising RFS & community safety. Aerial fire fighting (our main weapon) will be significantly retarded due to not being able to access Chaffey Dam due to powerline obstruction. This put human lives at risk.
- The project poses biosecurity risks to farmland and animals during construction and long after.

Preferred alternatives

I want to draw your attention to the fact that there are viable alternatives. The major alternative, crying out for your attention, is the Aberbaldie Travelling Stock Route (TSR) exiting Walcha, then directly following crown and state lands to the required end point. Numerous individual landholders and communities would be saved from this rapacious development were you to adopt this option.

There are other options that should also be considered:

Oxley Highway existing powerline upgrade using new technology like Dynamic Line Rating, Grid Enhancing Technologies (GETs), and Reconductoring.

Partial Undergrounding: Bury the lines on existing public routes (Oxley Highway). Successfully carried out in Japan, USA, Denmark & Germany.

The current preferred route is 49Km LONGER than the community proposed route that is 85% on Government land. 49Km equates to a waste of between \$700million and \$1.1bn based on the costs used in Humelink & CWO.

So as well as not caring about what the local community wants the Line developers are wasting taxpayer money. It is criminal. The impacts will resound on the local community well into the next generation.