

**INQUIRY INTO FEASIBILITY OF UNDERGROUNDING  
THE TRANSMISSION INFRASTRUCTURE FOR  
RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS**

**Name:** Frances Bowman  
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## **OBJECTION TO ENERGY Co ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE CENTRAL WEST ORANA REZ TRANSMISSION PROJECT**

As a 5<sup>th</sup> generation farmer and landholder in the Warrumbungle shire, I would like to object to the CWO REZ Transmission Project Environmental Impact Statement.

Firstly, I would like to point out that its very hard to respond to this document in the very limited time we have been given to read its 7910 pages whilst also running a business, and given that several parts of the EIS are subject to further refinement and detailed design (as quoted in the document).

The water required for the project is a VERY big concern. We are continually told that we are heading into an El Nino and several towns in the Warrumbungle Shire are already on water restrictions, yet the project is said to need 700 megalitres of water per year during construction. Where will this water come from? How will it affect our water table, stock water, domestic water and the surrounding towns water? That amount of water is ONLY for the transmission lines project, what about the cumulative amount from all the other developments going on at the same time?

The Bushfire risk is also a major concern. I feel that there is an increased risk of a bushfire starting during the construction period, because of the type of work being carried out. It appears to me that there is not enough equipment to fight a fire if one should start during construction and it will be left to the local VOLUNTEERS in the area to help control the fire. A static water supply is not enough as how will it get to the fire area if it can't be moved? There needs to be fire trucks on standby and personnel to drive said trucks so the local RFS volunteers are not relied upon.

There is a lot of waste that will be produced from the construction of the transmission lines (green waste, steel/metal, cabling, gravel, packaging, empty oil containers, etc), where will all this waste go? Where will all the household waste/sewerage/grey water be taken from the camps? Have the trucks that will have to transport this waste away been included in the traffic movements on the local roads? What is the cumulative impact of the waste from this project and all other projects running at the same time?

The Workers Camp proposed for Round Camp, near Merotherie, is to house 1200 workers. This camp, alone, is bigger than the closest town of Dunedoo. As it is, the residents of Dunedoo struggle to access timely medical care. As there is only provision for first aid facilities, a medical practitioner OR a paramedic in the camp, what happens when there is an emergency? Will the emergency services from Dunedoo, or the other small towns close by, be called out to the camp for assistance? If this is the case Dunedoo and surrounding towns will be left without for that time. Will our already stretched emergency workers be stretched even thinner?

The workers camps are located in very isolated places, will Police be provided at each camp to combat crime and unsavoury behaviour? How will the property owners and people living in near by houses be made to feel safe in their own homes with hundreds of strangers around when we are used to knowing all our neighbours?

Where will all the extra food, for both the Round Camp and the Neeley's Lane workers camps, come from? Will the surrounding small towns (Dunedoo, Coolah, Merriwa, Gulgong) be left without bread, Milk, etc because there are approximately 1800 more people in the district? (that only includes the transmission line construction workers, what about all the other construction workers too?)

The road network throughout the Warrumbungle, Upper Hunter, Mid-Western Regional and Dubbo Regional Council areas is in a bad state of repair after many years of neglect and some very bad flooding over the last few years, how do you expect to add hundreds of extra vehicle movements per hour without consequences to the state of the already degraded roads and affecting resident's ability to go about their business? There is estimated to be 100 extra vehicle movements along the Golden Highway, between Merotherie Road and Spring Ridge Road, per hour during construction, which is added to an already busy highway. How does Energy Co plan to make sure these extra vehicles don't have negative impacts on other commodities coming to and from the Port of Newcastle?

There is also the need for landowners to be able to cross the highway with stock and farm machinery. This also needs to happen on the smaller local roads and doesn't just happen at certain times of the day, as farmers and business operators need to be able to get things done in a timely manner! How will this happen when local roads go from having one vehicle per day to 32 PER HOUR? Has the cumulative effect of the traffic from the transmission project and the other projects running at the same time been considered? How will ALL these vehicles meet biosecurity measures and reduce the threats of new pests and diseases coming into this area and moving from farm to farm?

The major access route to the Round Camp workers camp (near Merotherie) is the Merotherie Road, of which 1.7km is a flood plain! It is proposed that the Merotherie Road be upgraded and a new bridge constructed over the Talbragar River. How will the new culverts and earthworks needed to make the road accessible during flood effect how the river now flows? How will it affect flooding on farmers land and will it cause new washouts and erosion? How will it affect how the river flows downstream? Each farmer along the river knows where the water currently flows and where they can get livestock to safety in the event of a flood, new works along the Merotherie Road will likely change that!

Social licence: How can undertaking only 44 interviews in an area with a population of 152,418 be considered gathering enough information about the area? That is ONLY 0.03% of the population! Even the online survey only reached 0.06% of the region's population! This can't possibly give an overall feeling of the majority of the area.

I am yet to meet a landowner who is willingly accepting the transmission infrastructure onto their land, they are being forced to become hosts through compulsory acquisition, with no negotiation from Energy Co's side.

There is now a lot of angst, unhappy people and some serious mental health concerns around the region because of the bullying tactics used by Energy Co. It is unfair that Energy Co thinks that they can come into the district and put this pressure on landholders and cause such health issues in the area.

In closing, I would like to know how and why you expect farmers and graziers to feed and clothe the nation if you take away approximately 4000ha of mostly valuable farming and grazing land during construction, and permanently destroy a large portion of this land? Why are farmers and graziers expected to feed and clothe you and now also produce the nations energy? Why can't the energy be produced where its used...along the coast? Or better still, use nuclear energy, located at the old coal fired power station sites, then there's no need for all the new transmission lines!!!