



TransGrid

REF Decision Statement

Coppabella Wind Farm – Rebuild of Transmission
Line 99M

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1. Introduction

TransGrid is the proponent and determining authority for the Coppabella Wind Farm – Rebuild of Transmission Line 99M (the proposed activity).

The proposed activity includes:

- > Replacement of all existing wooden pole transmission structures between Yass 330 kV substation and Structure 143 (inclusive) with new steel or concrete pole transmission structures up to 40 m in height. New structures would be installed approximately 5 m from the existing structures along the centreline of the easement.
- > Installation of optical ground wire on the rebuilt section of Line 99M, between Yass 330 kV substation and Structure 143 to facilitate the remote monitoring and protection of the new transmission connection.
- > Rearrangement of other transmission lines (Line 973, Line 970 and Line 990) outside of Yass 330 kV substation to facilitate the entry of the rebuilt Line 99M into the substation.
- > Construction of a new switchbay at Yass 330 kV substation to support the grid connection of Coppabella Wind Farm (CWF).

The proposed activity has been classed as Class 4 – Review of Environmental Factors (REF) in accordance with the *NSW Code of Practice for Authorised Network Operators* (the Code).

A REF was prepared by TransGrid in June 2019 to assess the potential impacts of the proposed activity. The REF was prepared in accordance with Part 5 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act), clause 228 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000* and the Code.

The REF was placed on public exhibition for comment from 13 June 2019 and 9 August 2019. A Submissions Report was prepared by TransGrid in November 2019 to document responses to issues raised in submissions during public exhibition.

To allow the proposed activity to proceed, TransGrid must make a determination of the REF in accordance with Part 5 of the EP&A Act.

The objectives of this Decision Statement are to:

- > Assess the environmental impacts of the proposed activity and determine the significance of those impacts
- > Document consultation with agencies and the public
- > Explain clearly why the key conclusions in the REF were or were not accepted
- > Document the authorised person's engagement with the REF
- > Make a determination of the proposed activity, or make a decision that there is insufficient information to discharge the duty under section 5.5 of the EP&A Act.

2. Description of the Proposed Activity

The proposed activity would involve the rebuild of Line 99M between Coppabella Wind Farm and Yass substation as a double circuit line to enable the grid connection of the wind farm development. The scope of works would involve the following:

- > Replacement of all existing wooden pole transmission structures between Yass 330 kV substation and Structure 143 (inclusive) with new steel or concrete pole transmission structures up to 40 m in height. At some locations, the new structure would be approximately 20 m higher than the existing wooden pole structures and would be installed within approximately 5 m of the existing structure, just off the centreline of the easement. The majority of the line rebuild would involve the existing wooden pole structures being replaced with single pole structures aside from the tension structures which would be replaced with two-pole structures.
- > Installation of optical ground wire (OPGW) on the rebuilt section of Line 99M, between Yass 330 kV substation and Structure 143 to facilitate the remote monitoring and protection of the new transmission connection.
- > Rearrangement of transmission lines outside of Yass 330 kV substation to facilitate the entry of the rebuilt Line 99M into the substation. This would include:
 - Replacement or strengthening works on Structures 1 (steel lattice tower) and 1A (concrete pole) on Line 970;
 - Replacement of Structure 522 (concrete pole) on Line 990;
 - Replacement of Structure 523 (steel lattice tower) on Line 973;
 - Installation of a new structure on Line 973 (near Structure 2 on Line 99M); and
 - Restrunging the conductors and earth wires from the structure replacement and installation locations into Yass substation.
- > Construction of a new switchbay at Yass 330 kV substation to support the grid connection of CWF. This would also involve secondary systems equipment to be installed within the control room and/or auxiliary services building for the necessary control and protection requirements.

To facilitate the works, the following ancillary works would be required:

- > Establishment of construction work sites at each structure. This would require surface disturbance of an area of approximately 40 m x 40 m surrounding the transmission structure for the laydown of equipment and materials and to support plant and machinery such as EWPs and cranes.
- > Establishment of a level construction benches at 34 structure locations to allow for the safe operation of plant and equipment including cranes and elevated work platforms. These would be located within the 40 m x 40 m construction work site.
- > Establishment of hurdles at ten undercrossing locations to provide the protection whilst stringing of conductor and earthwire above existing distributor electricity lines in the event that tension is lost. Two benches would be required at each undercrossing location to construct the hurdle.
- > Establishment of brake and winch sites at approximately 17 structure locations to pull through the OPGW, conductor and overhead earthwire.
- > Access track works to allow construction vehicles to gain safe access to the work locations including:
 - Repair, upgrade and maintenance of existing access tracks where required.
 - Construction of approximately 2.5 kilometre (km) of new access track to nine locations.
 - Widening of approximately 100 m of existing track to one structure location.
 - Upgrade of nine existing waterway crossings.
 - Construction of up to two new watercourse crossings.

3. Consultation

Consultation for the proposed activity was undertaken in accordance with TransGrid's Consultation Protocol and legislative requirements. A summary of the consultation undertaken with the general public and Government agencies is provided below. Full details of all consultation undertaken for the proposed activity are included in the REF and the Submissions Report.

During preparation of the REF, the following consultation tasks were undertaken:

- > Letters were sent to Yass Valley Council and Hilltops Council on 23 January 2019 and occupiers of land adjoining Yass substation on 22 March 2019 in accordance with Clause 42 of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007* (Infrastructure SEPP) and Section 45 (4) of the *Electricity Supply Act 1995*. The letter provided an overview of the proposed activity, the planning pathway and invited Council and the adjoining landholders to provide their input into the preparation of the REF.
- > Written notification was provided to National Parks and Wildlife Service on 22 March 2019 in accordance with Clause 16 of the Infrastructure SEPP as a portion of the proposed activity adjoins Hattons Corner Nature Reserve.
- > Written notification was provided on 22 March 2019 to other Government Agencies and stakeholders, which were considered likely to have a potential interest in the proposed activity. This included:
 - Department of Primary Industries (DPI) – Local Lands Services
 - Department of Industry – Lands and Water
 - DPI Fisheries
 - Environment Protection Authority
 - Fire and Rescue NSW
 - Rural Fire Service
 - Roads and Maritime Services
 - Civil Aviation Safety Authority.
- > All landholders along Line 99M, from Yass 330 kV substation to Structure 143 were also notified in writing of the proposed activity on 22 March 2019.

The REF was placed on public exhibition on TransGrid's website (<https://www.transgrid.com.au/what-we-do/projects/current-projects/yass-murrumburrah-project>) from 13 June 2019 to 9 August 2019. All stakeholders previously consulted as part of the preparation of the REF (refer above) were notified by letter on 12 June 2019 prior to the REF being placed on the website to inform them of the exhibition of the REF. The letter included exhibition timeframes and details on how to make a submission on the proposed activity. A phone number and email address were provided in the letter and on the website to enable all stakeholders to contact TransGrid to find out more information.

A total of 18 submissions were from the community and four submissions were from Government Agencies. No objections to the proposed activity were raised by Government Agencies that responded. All 18 submissions lodged by the community were of a nature that was not supportive of the proposed activity.

TransGrid prepared a Submissions Report to address all issues raised in the submissions and details how they have been considered and taken into account.

4. Consideration of Environmental Impacts

The REF details the proposed activity, assesses the potential impacts of the proposed activity on the environment and provides management measures to avoid, minimise, manage and/or offset those impacts.

The main issues raised in the REF and the submissions related to:

- > Adverse impacts on visual amenity.
- > Unavoidable impact to one previously recorded Aboriginal heritage site, which requires the need for an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit.
- > Direct vegetation removal and trimming to facilitate access to the work sites.
- > Impacts on land use, including agricultural land.
- > Planning approval process.
- > Consultation and engagement process.
- > Property and access.
- > Ownership and cost of the rebuilt transmission line.

The REF addresses the requirements of Section 5.5 of the EP&A Act by considering to the fullest extent possible, all matters affecting or likely to affect the environment from the proposed activity. The REF also considers factors prescribed under clause 228 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000*.

The REF assesses and considers the likely significance of the environmental impacts of the proposed activity under Clause 112 of the EP&A Act.

The REF also considers the requirements of the Commonwealth *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), and assesses all matters of National Environmental Significance (NES) and any impacts on Commonwealth land.

5. Conclusion

The REF and Submissions Report concludes that the proposed activity not likely to significantly affect the environment or threatened species, populations or ecological communities, or their habitats.

The REF also considers that the proposed activity is not likely to have a significant impact on matters of National Environmental Significance (NES) or Commonwealth land, and therefore does not require a referral under the Commonwealth EPBC Act.

With consideration of the environmental impacts detailed in the REF and Submissions Report, the key conclusions are accepted for the following reasons:

- > The REF has been prepared by persons appropriately trained to consider and assess the impacts of the proposed activity.
- > It is considered that the REF provides a true and fair review of the proposed activity in relation to its potential effects on the environment.
- > The REF is comprehensive and examines and takes into account, to the fullest extent possible, all matters affecting or likely to affect the environment as a result of the proposed activity.

6. Determination

I, Brian Salter, as an authorised person on behalf of TransGrid, have examined and considered the REF for the proposed Coppabella Wind Farm – Rebuild of Transmission Line 99M in accordance with section 5.5 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

I have been provided a detailed briefing on the contents of the REF and Submissions Report, and I have gained an understanding of the impacts of the proposed activity.

As per the requirements of section 2.5.1 of the Code, I have not been involved in conducting the assessment.

The proposed activity is not likely to significantly affect the environment, and is not likely to significantly affect threatened species, populations, ecological communities or their habitats.

I determine that an Environmental Impact Statement and Species Impact Statement are not required in respect of the proposed activity. The proposed activity may now proceed subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures in the REF and Submissions Report.

This is not a conditional decision and no further conditions are required (other than the mitigation measures stipulated in the REF).



Brian Salter

EM/ Legal Governance and Risk

TransGrid

Date: 31/03/2020