

Subject line: PADR Consultation

HI,

I make this submission as potentially affected landowners, owning property in Clydesdale that has a partial easement on the existing 220 kV Bendigo to Ballarat line. The affected address is 134 Wilsons Lane, Clydesdale, at which, as well as a permanent dwelling, there is a holiday accommodation business which could be potentially adversely affected by the proposals.

I understand the need for and are generally supportive of the requirement to have a robust network grid to ensure that the community is properly served. With regards to the specific VNI West proposal, I have read as much of the supporting data as I am able and make the following observations, specifically about the Bendigo to Ballarat connection:

1. It is not entirely clear if the proposed 500 kV connector is to supplement or replace the existing 220 KV line. I think it is to supplement, but would be grateful if you could confirm this.
2. Nowhere in any of the reports gives an indication of the actual size of the proposed overhead lines. It would be useful to know how this compares to the existing 220 kV line.
3. The most obvious solution will be to follow, as far as practicable, the existing easement, albeit with significant widening. Is this the intention?
4. The existing easement for 220 kV is 50m. If the 500 kV line does follow the exiting easement route, would this require a further widening of 70 m (ie for a total of 120m)?. Clearly this would be of significant personal interest. The existing line just clips our land - any further intrusion would severely impact the operation of our land and could adversely affect the red gum population along the creek. Even if the easement were widened to the north side, the visual effect would be significant.
5. The height of the pylons is a direct concern due to the potential visual intrusion. My hose looks out over the creek valley and the existing lines, whilst visible, are generally unobtrusive due to the surrounding landscape and vegetation. A significantly widened easement and larger towers and cables will inevitably detract from this situation. This would be a significant effect personally, but would also have a deleterious effect on the glamping business.
6. Section 6.4.6 Life Expectancy of the July 2022 report makes several assertions without any supporting data. Indeed, it is counterintuitive that underground cables would have a shorter life than overhead, insulated as they are from the elements.
7. The assertion that underground cables are 17 times more expensive again is not really justified anywhere, although with the cable joint at 500 m centres, this would clearly be a significant cost differential. This would be offset by the significant reduction in easement costs, however - it is not clear from the analysis how this is calculated. The obvious comparator would be the cables that were laid for the Victorian desalination plant; given the commercial requirements of that project, I find it highly unlikely that they would have paid 17 times more than necessary - are cost data available for that?
8. The property is "off-grid" and we would derive no direct personal benefit from the project. Given the rise of improved batteries leading to an increase in similar off-grid arrangements and small scale or micro grids (such as proposed in nearby Newstead), how much effort has been made to future proof this type of development and allow for their effects on the grid?

Yours faithfully

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