

Planning and Development (Conditional Environmental Significance Opinion – Replacement of Overhead Earth Wires within the Belconnen 132KV Network) Notice 2017

Notifiable Instrument NI2017–19

Made under the

Planning and Development Act 2007 s 138AD (Requirements in relation to environmental significance opinions)

1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Planning and Development (Conditional Environmental Significance Opinion – Replacement of Overhead Earth Wires within the Belconnen 132KV Network) Notice 2017*.

2 Conditional Environmental Significance Opinion

- (1) On 22 December 2016, the Conservator of Flora and Fauna, pursuant to section 138AB(4)(b) of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* (the **Act**), gave the Applicant a conditional environmental significance opinion in relation to the replacement of existing overhead earth wires within the Belconnen 132KV Network .
- (2) In this section:
Conditional environmental significance opinion means the opinion in the schedule.

Note: under section 138AD(6) of the Act, the conditional environmental significance opinion and this notice expire 18 months after the day this notice is notified.

Gary Rake
A/g Chief Planning Executive
13 January 2017

Schedule

See section 2(2)

ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OPINION

In accordance with section 138AB(4) of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* (the Act), I provide the following environmental significance opinion:

APPLICANT

ActewAGL Distribution, as represented by Trevor Fitzpatrick, Associate Director
Purdon Planning Pty Ltd.

APPLICATION and DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The applicant has applied under section 138AA of the Act to the Conservator of Flora and Fauna for an environmental significance opinion to the effect that the development proposal set out in the submission is not likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact (the application).

The development proposal is for the replacement of the existing overhead earth wires associated with the ActewAGL 132KV network with a new hybrid aerial cable known as optical ground wire in the section of the transmission network between the Transgrid Canberra Substation and the Latham zone substation as described in the submission.

LOCATION

Numerous blocks within the Belconnen district as detailed within the application. The 132KV line subject to this application commences at Block 1559 District of Belconnen, traverses the suburbs of Macgregor and Latham, to the zone substation located within Block 1 Section 14 Latham.

MATTERS TO WHICH THIS OPINION APPLIES

This opinion applies only the development proposal as described in the application.

OPINION

Provided the works are undertaken in the manner consistent with the following conditions, they are unlikely to cause a significant adverse environmental impact.

This opinion is granted subject to the following conditions made under s138AB(4) of the Act.

1. Stringing equipment and light vehicles travelling between poles are cleaned prior to arriving on site.
2. A program to minimise the likely spread and impact of African Lovegrass is developed prior to work commencing and implemented during operations.
3. The area of Tableland Dry Tussock Grassland, within Block 2 Section 139 Latham as shown in the map shown in Attachment A, and near the work area, is shown as a no go area on work plans

Attached is a Statement of Reasons for the decision.



Dr A. Lane
Conservator of Flora and Fauna

22 December 2016

STATEMENT OF REASONS REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The proposed development is a proposal mentioned in Schedule 4 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* – Development proposal for an activity requiring an EIS Schedule 4, being:

Part 4.3, item 1(a) development that may impact on a species or ecological community that is endangered, a species that is vulnerable; protected; or has special protection status;

The TransGrid to Latham section of the ActewAGL 132KV transmission network is approximately 5,200m in length with 17 towers that support the 132kV transmission line. The existing power line easement traverses urban open space that contains patches of native grassland and in a few places Natural Temperate Grassland occurs. In one of these patches the regionally rare plant Dwarf Milkwort *Polygala Japonica* has been recorded (near pole 2), while the critically endangered Golden Sun Moth has been recorded in grassland between poles 7 and 8.

The proponent wants the application for the development approval assessed in the merit track on the grounds that the proposal is not likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact, and has applied to the Conservator of Flora and Fauna to that effect.

Meaning of *significant* adverse environmental impact

An adverse environmental impact is *significant* if—

- (a) the environmental function, system, value or entity that might be adversely impacted by a proposed development is significant; or
- (b) the cumulative or incremental effect of a proposed development might contribute to a substantial adverse impact on an environmental function, system, value or entity.

In deciding whether an adverse environmental impact is *significant*, the following matters must be taken into account:

- (a) the kind, size, frequency, intensity, scope and length of time of the impact;
- (b) the sensitivity, resilience and rarity of the environmental function, system, value or entity likely to be affected.

In deciding whether a development proposal is likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact it does not matter whether the adverse environmental impact is likely to occur on the site of the development or elsewhere.

It has been determined that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant environmental impact, based on the documentation submitted, known values of the

site, and provided the works and ongoing management are carried out in accordance with the conditions attached to this ESO.

Project description

The proposal is for the replacement of the existing overhead earth wires associated with the ActewAGL 132KV network with a new hybrid aerial cable known as optical ground wire in the section of the transmission network between the Transgrid Canberra Substation (located on Block 1559 District of Belconnen) to the Latham zone substation at (Block 1 Section 14 Latham). The new hybrid cable is to enable ActewAGL to immediately identify the location of any outage and direct repair crews to the correct location.

The cable is to be upgraded for a distance of just over 5km between 17 towers. The new cable will be strung using stringing machines located at opposite ends of the target segment, as well as the area north of pole 10 due to the angle of the transmission line, where pulling around such a corner could place too much load on the tower.

Using light vehicles, crews will access each tower along the alignment using existing formal and informal access tracks, install temporary rollers on each tower and connect the existing overhead earth wire. The new optical ground wire will then be connected to the existing earth wires. As the existing earth wire is pulled out by stringing machines, the new optical wire will be pulled onto the temporary rollers. Work crews will then access each tower a final time to clip the optical wire in and remove the temporary rollers.

Each stringing machine requires a work area of approximately 10m², though some areas have been indicated within the ESO report as larger to allow for micro-siting of the machine. Each of these locations is within the managed easement which is cleared of overstorey vegetation (with the exception of some scattered trees adjacent to the TransGrid Canberra substation that will be avoided). The locations of stringing machines have been determined based on a combination of Occupational Health and Safety, site accessibility, efficiency, and consideration of environmental concerns.

Works are expected to take 1-2 days and no construction compound is required as the existing sub-station sites will be used for this purpose.

Documentation Submitted

- ActewAGL OPGW Maintenance Works – Multiple Sections Environmental Due Diligence Report (Purdon Planning, September 2016);
- ActewAGL OPGW Maintenance Works – Application for an Environmental Significance Opinion Report (Purdon Planning, October 2016);
- OPGW Cable Specifications;

- Map of Territory Plan land uses;
- Form 1M.

Natural conservation values present

The existing powerline easement contains patches of native grassland and in a few places, Natural Temperate Grassland. In one of these patches the regionally rare plant Dwarf Milkwort *Polygala Japonica* has been recorded (near pole 2), while the critically endangered Golden Sun Moth has been recorded in grassland between poles 7 and 8.

Potentially Significant Environmental Impacts

It is noted that where environmental values are present, there is the capacity to micro-site the stringing machine on an existing access track, degraded or bare areas where the risk of significant impacts on threatened flora or fauna would be low.

The ESO does mark some of the patches as no go areas, but has not mapped all patches, some of which are quite small. Nevertheless existing patches are not at the proposed stringing locations, and the light traffic between poles is unlikely to have a significant impact. It is considered that a significant impact on native grassland and wildlife would be avoided provided works are in accordance with the ESO application and the following additional conditions:

4. Stringing equipment and light vehicles travelling between poles are cleaned prior to arriving on site to reduce the risk of weed spread.
5. A program to minimise the likely spread and impact of African Lovegrass is developed prior to work commencing and implemented during operations.
6. The area of Tableland Dry Tussock Grassland, within Block 2 Section 139 Latham as shown in the map shown in Attachment A, and near the work area, is shown as a no go area on work plans.

It has been determined that if the works are undertaken in a manner consistent with the above conditions attached to the ESO, they are unlikely to cause a significant adverse environmental impact.