



STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND URBAN RENEWAL

CAROLINE LE COUTEUR MLA (CHAIR), MARK PARTON MLA, MICHAEL PETTERSSON MLA

**Inquiry into referred 2018–19 Annual and Financial Reports
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Asked by Ms Kikkert:

In relation to: construction of transmission towers for the ACT Second Electricity Supply Project between Ginninderra Estate and the Belconnen Magpies Golf Club, Holt

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, 2018–19 Annual Report, output class 1.2 Planning and Building Policy, pp. 39 and 258

1. The electrical utility easement between Ginninderra Estate and the Belconnen Magpies Golf Club in Holt is 90 metres wide. The schematics provided in the DA, the EIS and other supporting documents for the ACT Second Electricity Supply Project all show the new 330,000 kV transmission line (including towers 5a, 6a and 7a) placed in the centre of this easement. Instead, the towers have been built on the western edge of the easement, with the bases of the towers about 20 metres from the easement's boundary. In hearings, when you were asked about your knowledge of where in the easement these towers would be located, you replied, 'I was not the minister in 2014'. Mr Ponton added that the developer (Woodhaven) 'were aware of what was being proposed', and when I asked if this meant that 'the developers understand that these constructions would be built 20 metres away from people's homes', he responded that he would 'be very surprised if they did not'.
 - a. Though you were not the minister in 2014, you were the minister who approved the construction of these transmission towers through your call-in powers in 2018. Did you possess any documents when you approved the DA and/or EIS clearly indicating that towers 5a, 6a and 7a would be built near the western boundary of the easement (and therefore directly behind future houses) instead of in the centre of the easement? If so, can you please attach that/those document/s?
 - b. Can you provide evidence that the developer (Woodhaven) knew that the towers would not be located in the centre of the easement as depicted in the copies of the DA, EIS and other supporting documents that I have in my possession? When and how was this information provided to them?
 - c. You stated in hearings that it was the responsibility of the developer 'to engage with purchasers of those blocks to advise of the possibility of these towers going forward'. How exactly was the developer to do this if it had not yet been given an accurate representation of where in the easement the towers were going to be built?



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2. According to the 'TransGrid Fencing Guidelines', 'If a metal fence is installed near a high voltage transmission line, there is a possibility it could act as a conductor of electricity[,] and dangerous currents may be carried along the fence. These voltages may be an induced voltage from the fence being parallel to a nearby transmission line, or they may be a transferred voltage (or transferred potential), which occurs when a fence is installed too close to the high voltage transmission pole or tower' (p. 1). Further, metal 'fences within 10m of the easement should be earthed once in line with each structure [tower] and once in the middle of each span' (p. 3). Residents in Lionel Rose Street, Holt, have back fences that are metal and located less than 7 metres from the easement. They have informed me that none of their fences has been earthed in relation with TransGrid's own guidelines, as far as they know.
 - a. In light of these guidelines and known risks, why has the boundary of the easement been established less than 10 metres from homeowner's fences?
 - b. Do you know if these fences have been earthed according to TransGrid's guidelines? If not, how can this information be obtained?
 - c. Whose responsibility is it to make sure that these fences have been or will be earthed in accordance with TransGrid's fencing guidelines?
 - d. Assuming these fences are not earthed, what should residents be doing to avoid induced or transferred voltage in their fences until this problem is resolved?
3. I have in my possession the paperwork for the lease of one of the blocks in Ginninderra Estate that has been impacted by the construction of a transmission tower. It includes a Planning and Lease Manager (PaLM) Lease Conveyancing Enquiry Reported dated 7 August 2018. Regarding 'development applications on the adjacent properties' for the past two years, this ACT Government report is silent about the proposed development of the 330,000 kV transmission line and its attendant towers directly behind this property.
 - a. Why was the DA for the ACT Second Electricity Supply Project not listed on this report when the ACT Government was aware of this project since at least 2014 and the DA had already been filed?
 - b. The EIS for this project clearly identified risks to property values for homeowners in Ginninderra Estate. How would a purchaser of a block in Ginninderra Estate learnt about this development since the report from the ACT Government did not list provide this information?



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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MINISTER GENTLEMAN: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

1. DA201732500 (the DA) and the environmental impact statement (the EIS) documentation do not identify the towers in the centre of the easement. Rather, they show the towers being approximately 30 metres from the western edge of the easement. The EIS and the DA were both publicly notified with plans showing the proposed electricity line and towers to the western side of the easement.
 - a. Attachment A is an extract from the draft EIS assessment report (plans) showing the proposed transmission line (depicted as a black line) parallel with the existing 132kV line (depicted as a light purple line). Attachment B contains plans submitted as part of the DA showing the proposed transmission line (depicted as a dark black line) parallel with the existing 132kV line (depicted as a line with an 'E').
 - b. The location of the transmission towers within the golf course was discussed between representatives of TransGrid, Woodhaven Investments (the estate developer) and the Belconnen Golf Club to inform the final location of the lines and towers. Once the final location was settled, the development application was consented to by Woodhaven and the Golf Club. The lessee authorisation form of lodgement of the DA was signed by an authorised representative of Woodhaven on 14 December 2017 (Attachment C).
 - c. Woodhaven had been informed through the EIS and DA processes, including discussions with TransGrid mentioned above at answer 1b, of the specific location of the transmission towers, and was in a position to communicate the specific location to purchasers.
2. The registered electrical easement has existed through the golf course for a number of decades. The easement is approximately 90m wide and was established to cater for existing and future transmission lines to secure the electricity supply for the whole of the ACT.
 - a. The width of the registered easement has not changed as part of the DA.
 - b. TransGrid has undertaken an audit of fences that currently do not comply with earthing requirements. The audit identified a number of fences within and outside the easement that do not comply. The transmission lines are anticipated to commence operation in August 2020. Prior to operation, fences will require earthing at properties adjacent to towers and fencing across the easement.
 - c. TransGrid requires all metal fencing within proximity of the easement to be earthed. Following the fencing safety audit undertaken by TransGrid, which identified a number of fences that require earthing, TransGrid will work with residents to ensure all rectification work will be undertaken.
 - d. The transmission lines are not yet operational, and any concerns should be raised with TransGrid so that these can be resolved prior to operation commencing in August 2020.
3.
 - a. Development application (DA) 201732500 was lodged on 22 February 2018 over 11 large blocks. Due to IT system limitations, a number of blocks had to be manually removed from the database in order for the public notification package for that DA to be produced. Upon



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completion of the public notification process, the blocks that were removed from the database should have been entered back into the system. Due to an administrative oversight, this did not occur.

At the time the lease conveyancing report was produced for Block 18 Section 128 Holt, DA201732500 on Block 2 Section 132 Holt was not referenced as a result of that administrative error. Once Access Canberra was made aware of the error, the information in the planning database was updated to reflect all the subject blocks on which the development application was lodged and standard operating procedures were reviewed and updated to ensure this error does not occur again in the future.

- b. The EIS and the DAs for this proposal underwent significant community consultation processes and were publicly notified in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* (the Act).

The Draft EIS and DAs were notified concurrently between 5 March 2018 and 26 April 2018 (35 working days). The applications and representations received during this process were made available on the Planning website for viewing by the public during the consultation period as required by the Act. More than 500 letters were sent to lessees of blocks adjacent to the proposed development and 12 notification signs were erected along the boundary of the development site for the public notification period.

The estate developer for Ginninderra Estate (Woodhaven Investments) was consulted in relation to the details of the DA and provided authorisation for the DA to be lodged by way of a signed lessee authorisation form. Woodhaven Investments, who sold blocks to homeowners in 2018, was in a position to communicate the matters which were the subject of the DA to prospective buyers.

Blocks in the Ginninderra Estate (especially blocks in Section 128 Holt) have been developed next to an existing electrical easement, which contains existing 132 kV powerlines. This easement has been in place for many decades and was established to provide for current and future electrical infrastructure. The new electrical infrastructure is being constructed within the boundaries of the existing electrical easement at the required distance from both the easement boundary and the existing electrical infrastructure within the easement. The new powerlines are for the ACT Second Electrical Supply project which is contributing to energy security for all residents of the ACT.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal

Signature:

Date: 10/2/2020

By the Minister for Planning and Land Management, Mick Gentleman MLA