

10 March 2025

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NSW Transmission Planning Review
Farrier Swier Consulting

via email: transmissionplanningreview@dcceew.nsw.gov.au

Dr Mr Owens

Re: NSW Transmission Planning Review 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this NSW Transmission Planning Review consultation paper.

The Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner (AEIC) fulfills an independent role in Australia's electricity sector, with responsibilities including:

- Managing complaints from community members regarding proposed and operational wind farms and solar farms (5 MW or more), energy storage facilities (1 MW or more), and new large-scale transmission projects.
- Promoting transparency and best practices in industry and government, and
- Assisting the Australian Government in implementing the recommendations of the AEIC's Community Engagement Review.

Since the expansion of the AEIC's role in 2021 to include oversight of new major transmission projects, the Commissioner has worked collaboratively with all levels of government, industry, landholders and community members to resolve complaints, ensure better community engagement, and promote transparency and best practice regarding transmission planning.

The AEIC recognises the importance of reducing duplication and ensuring better coordination between TransGrid, EnergyCo, AEMO, and AEMO Services for new electricity transmission projects to deliver the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap.

Our Office encourages the further development of the consultation paper's draft assessment criteria, particularly regarding the promotion of timely planning and delivery of transmission projects, improving outcomes for NSW electricity consumers and local communities and providing clear and effective allocation and coordination of roles and responsibilities. We offer the following comments below for your consideration.

Effectively informing and involving local communities in route selection decisions: the Review's assessment criteria should carefully consider decisions related to the design and

route selection of new transmission network projects. To mitigate unintended consequences and minimise widespread opposition across multiple communities, it is essential to uphold a balanced approach that prioritises equity, transparency, and meaningful engagement. Equity in energy infrastructure entails ensuring that communities have a genuine role in the decision-making process, with their concerns and needs thoroughly considered. This extends beyond mere consultation and information sharing; it requires taking substantive action on community input and fostering a true partnership in which individuals feel respected and the benefits are equitably distributed. To this end, the Office suggests that the Review's assessment criteria regarding timely planning and delivery take into consideration early community engagement on potential route selection and land use conflicts (if not already included).

Managing construction impacts and maximising regional benefits: issues commonly raised by community members and landholders include the effective management of construction impacts, impacts to visual amenity and the natural environment, land access and potential loss of property value. To ensure regional communities experience maximum benefits of the energy transition, it is essential that there is effective community engagement, effective relationships are developed through efficient and regular communication, and community members and landholders are adequately funded.

Clarifying roles and responsibilities: the Office considers it crucial to have clear and effective allocation and coordination of roles and responsibilities for the planning, deployment and ownership of the large-scale transmission grid. The Review provides a good opportunity to ensure better coordination and planning between relevant entities. Identifying duplication and improving coordination will ensure that transmission projects are completed in a timely manner and enable further uptake of renewable generation capacity required to maintain reliability and affordability.

For further information, please refer to previous AEIC submissions relating to transmission infrastructure projects:

- AEIC submission to AER Directions Paper on Social Licence for Electricity Transmission Projects: aeic-submission-to-aer-directions-paper-on-social-licence-for-electricity-transmission-projects.pdf
- AEIC Community Engagement Review details transmission development and community engagement matters (pp. 57-60):
<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/community-engagement-review-report-minister-climate-change-energy.pdf#page=65>
- AEIC Annual Report 2022, Appendix C: submission to AEMO's Draft 2022 Integrated System Plan (pp. 91-94):
<https://www.aeic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2023-06/aeic-2022-annual-report.pdf#page=94>
- AEMC submission to AEMC Transmission Planning and Investment Review: [211009 - AEIC Submission to AEMC Transmission Planning and Investment Review - FINAL](https://aemc.org.au/sites/default/files/2023-06/211009-AEIC%20Submission%20to%20AEMC%20Transmission%20Planning%20and%20Investment%20Review%20-%20FINAL.pdf)
- Commissioner's EMM presentation on transmission, 28 October 2022: [PowerPoint Presentation](https://www.aeic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2023-06/PowerPoint%20Presentation%20-%20Transmission%20-%2028%20October%202022.pdf)

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide some comments regarding transmission planning arrangements in NSW. I look forward to discussing these arrangements in more detail with you as the Review process progresses.

If you have any further questions in relation to these comments or require additional information, please contact us via email at aeic@aeic.gov.au or on 1800 656 395.

Yours sincerely,

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