

Our Ref: SP329510 L5-3601/13 (243)  
NA-LI/01/0005  
Your Ref: L12/0200/14(Z)  
Contact: Trent Wallis  
Date: 24 July 2000



**Natural Resources  
and Environment**

AGRICULTURE

RESOURCES

CONSERVATION

LAND MANAGEMENT

Mr Michael Kirsch  
Manager, Development Services  
Mildura Rural City Council  
PO Box 105  
MILDURA Vic 3502

Dear Sir

**PLANNING PERMIT APPLICATIONS A00/096  
'MURRAYLINK' DEVELOPMENT,  
BERRI, SA TO RED CLIFFS, VICTORIA**

I refer to the above planning application referred to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment under Section 55 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) has undertaken extensive consultation with the proponents with regard to the above planning application, including a number of on-site inspections. A cable alignment has been agreed upon that will minimise impact to native vegetation along the proposed route.

The Department has reviewed the proposed disturbance along the proposed route and has estimated the cost required to revegetate disturbed areas of the route to achieve a "no net loss"\* outcome for biodiversity for the 'Murray Link' project to be in the order of \$67,000. The Department has also estimated the figure required to achieve a "net gain"\* in biodiversity for the project to be in the order of \$100,000. This would involve enhancing (via fencing and revegetation etc.) a 6.3 km section of degraded unnamed east-west roadside corridor between Yarrara North Road and Bambill North Road in the Millewa dryland district. These figures are in addition to the general cost required to achieve physical rehabilitation (soil stabilisation etc), which is a mandatory requirement of completing the project. These figures (see table attached) formed the basis of successful negotiations between the proponent Mike Farr of TransÉnergie and the Department held on 18 July 2000.

As a result of these negotiations the proponent has agreed to commit \$100,000 to undertake revegetation and habitat enhancement activities along the proposed route to achieve a "net gain" for biodiversity for the 'Murray Link' Project. The company has indicated that it would prefer a local group such as the Millewa Carwarp Landcare Group to manage the revegetation activities.

\* The principle of 'no net loss' is a key objective of Victoria's Biodiversity Strategy (DNRE, 1997 a, b &c). A key goal of the strategy is to: *'ensure that within Victoria there is a reversal, across the entire landscape, of the long-term decline in the extent and quality of native vegetation, leading to a net gain with the first target being no net loss by the year 2001'*. The aim is to achieve a balance between net losses (vegetation cleared) and associated gains (such as vegetation protection and enhancement) within a bioregion.

**Having regard to the above, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment has no objection to the above planning application provided the following conditions are met.**

**Roadside native vegetation disturbance**

1. Vegetation removal and disturbance is to be minimised during construction, operation and maintenance of the proposed 'Murray Link' DC cable installation, in accordance with the recommendations of the "*Murraylink - Red Cliffs, Victoria to Berri, South Australia Underground Electricity Transmission System Application Report, February 2000*" (Ref: AN9066-01), KinHill's report of 19 May 2000 provided as additional information (Ref: AN9066-C01-S680), and an addendum to these reports (see attached) provided on 22 May 2000.
2. An Environmental Management Plan (EMP), to be developed for the project in accordance Section 7 of the "*Murraylink - Application Report*" (Ref AN9066-01) and page 6 of the Report of 19 May 2000 (Ref AN9066-C01-S680), is to be submitted to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment for approval prior to the commencement of works. All works are to be undertaken in accordance with the approved Environmental Management Plan (EMP).
3. The proponent is pay the sum of \$100,000 to a secure fund set up in the name of the Millewa Carwarp Landcare Group for the purposes of achieving a "net gain" for biodiversity as a result of undertaking the 'Murray Link' project. The funds are to be supplied to the Millewa Carwarp Landcare Group prior to commencement of works, via a contract to be developed to the satisfaction of the proponent, Council, DNRE and the Millewa Carwarp Landcare Group.
4. The funds are to spent by the Millewa Carwarp Landcare Group under the direction of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment for the purpose of revegetation and habitat enhancement activities along specified areas of the proposed 'Murray Link' DC cable route, in order to achieve a "net gain" in the area's biodiversity as a result of the project.

**Works on Crown land (Part CA 12C, Sec B1, Parish of Mildura)**

5. Only the minimum amount of native vegetation is to be disturbed (ie. in the form of trimming), as agreed to on-site with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and Parks Victoria.
6. The Guidelines for the Siting and Design of Diversion Works on or across Crown land are to be adhered to.
7. All future installations at the site will require consultation with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and Parks Victoria.
8. A final inspection by Parks Victoria and the Department's Forest Management section is to occur prior to the commencement of works, following survey and pegging of the pipeline route.

**General Conditions**

9. Following installation, the pipeline route is to be rehabilitated in accordance with the recommendations of the "*Murraylink - Red Cliffs, Victoria to Berri, South Australia Underground Electricity Transmission System Application Report, February 2000*" (Ref: AN9066-01) and KinHill's report of 19 May 2000 provided as additional information (Ref: AN9066-C01-S680).
10. Detailed rehabilitation plans, to be prepared as part of the an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the project in accordance Section 7 of the "*Murraylink - Application Report*" (Ref AN9066-01) and page 6 of the Report of 19 May 2000 (Ref AN9066-C01-S680), are to be submitted to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment for approval prior to the commencement of works. All rehabilitation works are to be undertaken in accordance with the approved Environmental Management Plan (EMP).
11. Soil and material to be introduced to the backfill trench must be inspected by a DNRE officer to ensure the material is weed free.
12. Any unused soil and backfill that is not used must removed at the completion of the works.
13. Any change to the proposed route or to the construction, operational or maintenance procedures must be referred to DNRE for approval prior to commencement.

The Department advises that the applicant contact Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) with regard to the project's potential impact to Aboriginal cultural and archaeological values.

Given the nature of the development, it is recommended that all future issues including any deviations from the proposed route be resolved by a meeting with representatives from TransÉnergie, project consultants Brown & Root, Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, Parks Victoria, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, the Mallee Catchment Management Authority and the Mildura Rural City Council.

Please contact Trent Wallis at the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Mildura, if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Yours faithfully,

**John Cooke**  
**Manager Sunraysia**  
**Northern Irrigation Region**

cc Jackie Boyer, Brown and Root Services (Kinhill) Consulting  
Mike Farr, TransEnergie  
Siobhan Rogan, Parks Victoria  
Scott Glyde, Mallee Catchment Management Authority  
Mat Crawley, Millewa Carwarp Landcare Group