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25<sup>th</sup> March, 2003

Mr Sebastian Roberts  
A/g General Manager  
Regulatory Affairs –Electricity  
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission  
PO Box 1199  
DICKSON ACT 2602

FILE No:
DOC:
MARS/PRISM:

Dear Mr Roberts

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the ACCC's review of the regulatory test.

We Des and Di Chandler have an interest in the "review of the regulatory test" due to being affected by Powerlink's proposal to acquire a 60 metre easement across our prime agricultural land for the purpose of erecting a 330kva high voltage overhead powerline to connect Millmerran Power Station to Middle Ridge Substation, Toowoomba, Queensland.

No amount of compensation would be enough for the distress caused by the consultation process, the drop in land values, the disruption to community cohesion and, above all, to the blight on the beautiful landscape in which we live. Undergrounding the power line would prove less costly and less unsightly to the general public and government if train line easements, roadways or existing power easements were utilised. No compensation would need to be paid out to individual freehold landowners. Therefore, saving tax payers money.

We believe it adversely affects us personally in that we own a 265 hectare property of prime agricultural land, one of the highest valued farms in the Clifton Shire for the purpose of growing grain. This proposed corridor has successfully cut our farm in two as well as targeting our house and sheds. If the proposed corridor comes within 500 metres of our farm house, research through local Real Estate Agents has shown that up to 50% of the Market Value could be lost, also only 1 in 5 potential buyers would even be interested and we would expect to be compensated for this. Furthermore, we have always regarded this farm to be our retirement fund (superannuation).

This proposal has a detrimental affect to our farming practices. We have spent thousands of dollars land planing and levelling the gullies throughout the farm on our conservation strips which are set at 60 metres to accommodate the width of our machinery and power poles (towers) would severely hinder the working of each land. Also erosion during storms and heavy rain would occur due to the furrows of the tram tracking being altered (not straight) to go around the poles would add extra burden and bust out causing gullies. The extra water running off each tower would add greatly to

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the erosion. Our strips are in place to prevent this happening and to preserve the country.

Future planning for the farm is also in jeopardy. Our dream is to utilize the Brisbane Waste Water and install an irrigation system with a travelling lateral irrigator. With up to 5 towers across our conservation strips how are we supposed to travel the irrigator down or across our farm? Unless the farm can show a profit, finance companies are not going to finance this enterprise as not enough hectares will be available to irrigate for us to earn a living and pay the finance company.

Over the last 5 to 10 years we have been successful in getting our farm to a noxious weed free state, however, extra power lines would encourage extra birds and therefore more foreign weeds. Powerlink would require entrance twice a year to check these lines and this would also transfer noxious weeds from neighbouring properties.

We rely heavily on being able to use spray rigs and spray planes in the operation of our farm. If planes cannot be used – we will lose profitability because every hour/day can mean profit or loss to crops which means thousands of dollars lost. Often it is too wet to use ground rigs therefore planes have to be used as an alternative. Aerial spraying between existing power lines and the high voltage towers could prove fatal. However, the towers also cause a problem with the ground rigs as our boom spray is 15 metres wide, which is two complete orbits of the strip, going around the towers creates loss of crop or just makes extra wheel tracks for erosion to occur.

The amount of profitable farming country taken over by the easements acquired by Powerlink is robbery. We struggle with nature everyday we shouldn't have to take a loss on our farm through loss of income, devaluation, and blight on landscape, loss of time talking to Powerlink and then solicitors for advice when this proposed easement was forced onto us. Legal advice has to be obtained in order that our rights as Australian citizens are protected from Powerlink.

We also feel we should be compensated for the time lost in these talks when we could be better employed in working our freehold land. Many hours are lost in productive time. The checking of easements by Powerlink will cause the destruction of crops i.e. Sorghum, wheat, barley, mung beans, chick peas, sunflowers, corn, oats, etc. This also is extra cost to tax payers.

The least cost solution invariably does not take into account the full social and economic costs to us individuals who have to bear the costs for other areas of Queensland.

We strongly urge the ACCC to decide in favour of broadening the regulatory test to include the total cost to the community affected.

*Yours sincerely*  
*DB Chandh.*