This report evaluates the application for an exemption under section 211 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007*, from requiring a completed Environmental Impact Statement in the development application for the Williamsdale 132 kV Electrical Line Connection:

**Ref no:** 201630331  
**Date lodged:** 21/December 2016  
**Project:** Williamsdale 132kV Electrical Line Connection  
**Street no. and name:** Monaro Highway, Williamsdale  
**Proponent:** Purdon Planning

The following information provides the certificate of approval for issue of this report.

**Document no:** 1-2016/12237  
**Date of issue:** 30 March 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reviewed by</td>
<td>Senior Manager</td>
<td>Jonathan Teasdale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Brett Philips</td>
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<td>Deputy Director- General</td>
<td>Gary Rake</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved by</td>
<td>Director-General</td>
<td>Dorte Ekelund</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Contents

Application for EIS Exemption .................................................................................................................... i
Consideration Report ................................................................................................................................... i

1. Introduction .............................................................................................................................................. 4
   1.1. Project .............................................................................................................................................. 4
   1.2. Background .................................................................................................................................. 5

2. Environmental impact assessment ........................................................................................................... 5
   2.1. Impact track triggers ..................................................................................................................... 5
   2.2. Section 211 Process ....................................................................................................................... 6
   2.3. The EIS exemption application ...................................................................................................... 8
   2.4. EIS exemption decision ............................................................................................................... 8
   2.5. Consultation .................................................................................................................................. 8

3. Impacts on Schedule 4 items .................................................................................................................... 11
   3.1 Schedule 4 Part 4.2 Item 2 – construction of electricity transmission lines ..................................... 11
   3.2 Schedule 4 Part 4.3 Item 1 – impacts on species or ecological communities ................................. 13
   3.3 Other potential Schedule 4 items .................................................................................................... 20

4. Other potential environmental impacts .................................................................................................. 22
   4.1 Visual impact .................................................................................................................................. 22
   4.2 Aboriginal cultural heritage ............................................................................................................ 22
   4.3 Impact on waterway ....................................................................................................................... 23

5. EIS exemption conditions ....................................................................................................................... 24

6. Conclusion .............................................................................................................................................. 26

Appendix 1 – Referral Entity Comments .................................................................................................... 27

Figures

Figure 1 - aerial photo of the project location ............................................................................................. 4
Figure 2 - the section 211 process ................................................................................................................ 7
Figure 3 – proposed new poles and electrical line ..................................................................................... 14
Figure 4 – proposed new poles and electrical line ..................................................................................... 14
Tables

Table 1 - Legal land description and tenancy ................................................................. 5
Table 2 - EIS triggers per Schedule 4 of the PD Act......................................................... 5
Table 3 – Entity referral response .................................................................................... 9
Table 4 - Summary of public consultation ........................................................................ 10
Table 5 – Previous studies 1 .............................................................................................. 12
Table 6 - threatened species within the area..................................................................... 15
Table 7 – Previous studies 2 .............................................................................................. 16
Table 8 - Mitigation measures – impacts on species or ecological communities............... 19
Table 9 - Mitigation measures – native vegetation clearance ............................................ 21
Table 10 – Conditions for development approval .............................................................. 25
## Glossary and definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGW</td>
<td>White Box-Yellow Box Blakely Red Gum Grassy Woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEMP</td>
<td>construction environmental management plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>development application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIA</td>
<td>Environmental impact assessment: the process of identifying, predicting, evaluating and mitigating the biophysical, social, and other relevant effects of development proposals before major decisions and commitments are made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIS</td>
<td>Environmental impact statement: a document prepared to detail the expected environmental, social and economic effects of a development, and state commitments to avoid, mitigate or satisfactorily control and manage any potential adverse impacts of the development on the environment. In the ACT, an EIS is required for proposals in the impact track as per Section 127 of the <em>Planning and Development Act 2007</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMP</td>
<td>environmental management plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPBC Act</td>
<td><em>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPD</td>
<td>Environment and Planning Directorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPA</td>
<td>Environment Protection Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPSDD</td>
<td>Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD Act</td>
<td><em>Planning and Development Act 2007 (ACT)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNES</td>
<td>Matter of national environmental significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Authority</td>
<td>Planning and land authority within EPSDD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Introduction
This report is to the ACT Minister for Planning on the assessment of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) exemption application in relation to the Electrical Transmission Line. The application was made by Purdon Planning, on behalf of Essential Energy under section 211B of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* (the PD Act).

This is a concurrent EIS exemption application. The proposal includes a Development Application (DA) and an EIS exemption Application. If an EIS exemption is granted, the DA must be decided not later than 10 working days. According to section 147AB (3) of the Act, if the EIS exemption is refused, rejected or withdrawn, the application is taken to have been refused.

1.1. Project
The proposal is for construction of approximately 1000m of overhead 132kV powerline connecting the existing Transgrid Williamsdale Substation with the existing Queanbeyan-Cooma sub-transmission line located in NSW. Approximately 600m of the powerline will be within the ACT.

The works will include the following:

- Installation of new infrastructure (poles, wires, stays)
- Civil earthworks (pole and stay footings, tracks, benching of pads around poles)
- Connection to the existing Transgrid sub-station

1.1.1. Project location
The Williamsdale Powerline EIS exemption application relates to land located at blocks 119, 1674 and 1675 Tuggeranong. The site is located at Williamsdale adjacent to the ACT/NSW border and approximately 40km south of the Canberra City Centre, via the Monaro Highway.
1.1.2. **Legal land description and tenancy**

The Williamsdale Powerlines will directly affect three blocks. Table 1 shows the legal land description for each block affected by the proposal and the details of tenancy type and tenant.

**Table 1 - Legal land description and tenancy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Tenancy</th>
<th>Tenant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1674</td>
<td>Tuggeranong</td>
<td>Leased Territory Land</td>
<td>Transgrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1675</td>
<td>Tuggeranong</td>
<td>Leased Territory Land</td>
<td>ACTEW Corporation Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>Tuggeranong</td>
<td>Leased Territory Land</td>
<td>Private Lessee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2. **Background**

Essential Energy proposed to connect the existing 132kV powerline (Queanbeyan to Cooma #975 line) to TransGrid’s 220/132kV substation in Williamsdale, ACT.

Originally, the #975 line was operated by TransGrid to supply Cooma area. Over recent years the line was only used as a backup supply and the tee connection at Williamsdale was disconnected.

The ownership of the #975 line has now passed from TransGrid to Essential Energy. Essential Energy proposed to use the #975 line to supply the new Googong Substation and any future supply to the Tralee (South Jerrabomberra) area.

2. **Environmental impact assessment**

Environmental impact assessment (EIA) processes are used to identify, predict, plan for and manage the impacts of development proposals before a decision is made about the project going ahead.

An EIA process is required to be undertaken for projects in the impact track.

Section 123 of the PD Act states that the impact track applies to a development if:

- the relevant development table states that the impact track applies
- the proposal is of a kind mentioned in Schedule 4 of the PD Act
- the Minister makes a declaration under section 124
- section 125 or section 132 applies to the proposal, or
- the Commonwealth Minister responsible for the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) advises the Minister in writing that the development is a controlled action under the EPBC Act, section 76.

2.1. **Impact track triggers**

The proposal is in the impact track as it is a development of a kind mentioned in Schedule 4 of the PD Act. This proposal triggers the Schedule 4 items listed in Table 2.

**Table 2 - EIS triggers per Schedule 4 of the PD Act**

[Application for section 211 EIS Exemption Consideration Report]
[Williamsdale 132 kV Electrical Line Connection]
[Version: 1.0]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Project Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 4.2, item 2</td>
<td>proposal that involves—(a) electricity transmission line construction, including additions or realignment works, outside an existing easement or exceeding 500m in length, that are intended to carry underground or above-ground transmission lines with a voltage of 132kV or more.</td>
<td>The proposal involves construction of approximately 6000m electricity transmission line that is intended to carry above-ground transmission lines with a voltage of 132kV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part 4.3, item 1</td>
<td>proposal that is likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact on 1 or more of the following, unless the conservator of flora and fauna provides an environmental significance opinion indicating that the proposal is not likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact: (a) a threatened ecological community; (b) an endangered species;</td>
<td>The project may have significant adverse impact on a threatened ecological community (BGW) and some endangered woodland bird species.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.2. Section 211 Process

The flowchart below outlines the EIS exemption application process.
Figure 2 - the section 211 process

Notes:
- Proponent is strongly advised to seek advice from EPD before submitting an EIS exemption application.
- EPD may seek advice from relevant agencies to inform it's assessment of the request.
- The exemption (and report) is a Notifiable Instrument which is placed on the legislation register.
2.3. The EIS exemption application
In accordance with section 211B of the Planning and Development Act 2007 the application for an EIS exemption was lodged by Purdon Planning to the planning and land authority (the Authority), within the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) on 21 December 2016. As required by EIS exemption application - Form 1M, the application contained the following information to inform the assessment of the application:

- Heritage Report: ‘Cultural Heritage Desktop Assessment’
- Ecological Study: ‘Williamsdale 132kV Connection Ecological Assessment Report’
- Targeted Flora Survey
- CV of the Author of the Heritage Report
- CV of the Author of the Ecological Study

2.4. EIS exemption decision
Section 211H of the PD Act states that the Minister may grant an EIS exemption for the proposal if satisfied that the exempted environmental impact of the development proposal has already been sufficiently addressed by a recent study, whether or not the recent study relates to the particular development proposal.

In deciding whether the environmental impact of the development proposal has been sufficiently addressed by the recent study, the Minister must consider:

(a) whether the recent study was conducted by an appropriately qualified person with relevant expertise and experience in relation to the environmental values of the land in the proposal; and
(b) if the recent study does not relate directly to the proposal—whether there is sufficient detail to allow assessment of the environmental impacts likely to occur if the proposal proceeds; and
(c) whether the part of the recent study relevant to the proposal required public consultation through a statutory process or as part of a government policy development; and
(d) if the recent study is more than 18 months old—whether the Minister is satisfied that the information in the study is current; and
(e) any submissions received during the consultation period for the EIS exemption application.

This report documents the information presented by the proponent, information received during entity consultation and public notification to inform the Minister in making a decision.

For each impact track trigger an assessment of the supporting information will be made against the criteria above in the corresponding sub-sections under Section 3 of this report.

2.5. Consultation
Entity consultation and public notification were both undertaken concurrently for Williamsdale Powerlines SECTION 211 EIS exemption application and the DA. In accordance with section 147AB of the PD Act, the EIS exemption application was publically notified concurrently with the DA for 35 working days, ended on 28 February 2017.
2.5.1 Entity referral
Section 211E of the PD Act requires the Minister to consult with entities prescribed in the Planning and Development Regulations about the EIS exemption application. The Minister may also seek advice from other entities.

For the proposed development the Authority referred the EIS exemption application to the following mandatory and relevant entities on 11 January 2017:

Table 3 – Entity referral response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referred entities</th>
<th>Entity response</th>
<th>Entity response date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACTEW AGL</td>
<td>No comment received.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservator of Flora and Fauna</td>
<td>Further information is required to demonstrate broader impacts from the clearance of trees within the approximately 300m x 30m wide powerline corridor.</td>
<td>2 February 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Services Commissioner</td>
<td>No special considerations or objections.</td>
<td>25 January 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment Protection Authority</td>
<td>No comment received.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT Heritage Council</td>
<td>The EIS exemption application is not supported, as the application does not adequately assess the heritage values of place, or the potential heritage impacts of the proposed development.</td>
<td>25 January 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT Health</td>
<td>No comment.</td>
<td>30 January 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport Canberra and City Services</td>
<td>Adequate studies have been undertaken and sufficient documentation has been prepared to support the application for EIS exemption.</td>
<td>2 February 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Capital Authority</td>
<td>No comment.</td>
<td>13 January 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council</td>
<td>Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council notes that the proposed transmission line poles to be built in NSW are to be constructed on land within Snowy Monaro Regional Council. Please contact and provide the information to Snowy Monaro</td>
<td>25 January 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comments were received from seven entities during the consultation period. Entity submissions are included in this report as they relate to each trigger or potential impact and set out at APPENDIX 1. Any matters to be considered or conditions that have been recommended by a referral entity will be included in Section 3 of this report.

2.5.2 Public consultation
The PD Act requires the Minister to consult with the public on an EIS exemption application for 15 working days. However, this EIS exemption application was lodged as part of concurrent development application the concurrent consultation period is not less than 35 working days plus any concurrent extension period. In accordance with section 147AB of the PD Act, the EIS exemption application was publically notified concurrently with the DA for 35 working days, ended on 28 February 2017.

Note: Under section 211G, if no submissions about the application are received within the consultation period the revised application must include a statement to that affect.

No public submissions were received during the consultation period and the revised application has stated this.

Table 4 provides a summary of which information was made available during the public consultation process and for what length of time.

Table 4 - Summary of public consultation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of document</th>
<th>Public consultation method</th>
<th>Number of days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purdon Planning (2016), Electrical Transmission Line Williamsdale 132kV Connection Application for EIS exemption under section 211 of the Planning and Development Act 2007</td>
<td>information available on EPSDD website</td>
<td>35 working days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Ecology (2016), Curriculum Vitae – Robert Speirs</td>
<td>information available on EPSDD website</td>
<td>35 working days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIS exemption Concurrent Letter</td>
<td>information available on EPSDD website</td>
<td>35 working days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Ecology (2016), Williamsdale 132kV Connection Ecological Assessment Report</td>
<td>information available on EPSDD website</td>
<td>35 working days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PastTraces (2016), Cultural Heritage Desktop Assessment</td>
<td>information available on EPSDD website</td>
<td>35 working days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PastTraces (n.d.), Lyn O’Brien detail</td>
<td>information available on website</td>
<td>35 working days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site plan - 01</td>
<td>information available on EPSDD website</td>
<td>35 working days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Impacts on Schedule 4 items

This section summarises the impacts of the development on relevant items from Schedule 4 of the PD Act. For each item the supporting studies and the comments of referral entities and the public are listed along with any recommended mitigation measures. A conclusion is made on whether or not the information satisfies the requirements of section 211 of the PD Act.

3.1 Schedule 4 Part 4.2 Item 2 – construction of electricity transmission lines

The proposal is for construction of approximately 1,000m of overhead 132kV powerline connecting the old ‘tee-off point’ on the Cooma/Queanbeyan line in NSW to the existing substation at Williamsdale within the ACT. Approximately 600m of the new powerline will be within the ACT.

The EIS exemption report states that the proposed development could result in loss of threatened ecological community, loss of habitat for threatened species, loss of native vegetation, weed invasion, impact on heritage values, visual impact, impact on waterway, bushfire risk and impact on air quality.

3.1.1 Impacts

The following impacts have been identified by the proponent in relation to the proposed development:

- Loss of threatened ecological community.
- Potential impact on foraging and breeding habitat of some threatened woodland birds.
- Removal of native vegetation.
• Weed invasion from truck movement.
• Impact on heritage values.
• Impact on waterway from contamination or erosion and sedimentation.
• Impact on traffic movement.
• Ignition of bushfire fuels either within or adjoin the easement corridor.
• Impacts on air quality.
• Noise from trucks movement and construction works.
• Impacts on visual amenity of the surrounding area.
• Health and safety impact from construction or electromagnetic radiation.

It is noted that most of the impacts identified above are not significant, based on the preliminary risk assessment undertaken by the proponent. Any potential significant impacts have been assessed separately in the following sections.

3.1.2 Previous studies and investigation
Eight studies have been submitted by the proponent to address impacts related to construction of the electricity transmission line. The information submitted by the proponent to support the application is listed and assessed for relevance against the requirements of section 211H of the PD Act [Error! Reference source not found.].

Table 5 – Previous studies 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE &amp; AUTHOR OF STUDY</th>
<th>QUALIFIED PERSON</th>
<th>RECENT STUDY</th>
<th>INFORMATION DIRECTLY RELATED TO PROPOSAL?</th>
<th>EXPERT/PEER REVIEWED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purdon Planning (2016), Electrical Transmission Line Williamsdale 132kV Connection Application for EIS exemption under section 211 of the Planning and Development Act 2007</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Ecology (2016a), Curriculum Vitae – Robert Speirs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Ecology (2016b), Williamsdale 132kV Connection Ecological Assessment Report</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PastTraces (2016), Cultural Heritage Desktop Assessment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PastTraces (n.d.), Lyn O’Brien detail</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Ecology (2016c), Williamsdale 132kV Connection – Targeted Flora Survey</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential Energy (2017), Weed Management Plan for Williamsdale 132kV Connection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PastTraces (2017), Cultural Heritage Assessment and Statement of Heritage Effects – Williamsdale Electricity Easement</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.1.3 Entity referral and public comments

The Conservator of Flora and Fauna provided comments on the proposal which related to impacts on ecology values. The comments requested further information to address impacts from the proposed easement corridor.

The ACT Heritage Council provided comments on the proposal which related to impact on heritage values. The comments requested further information to determine whether the proposed development will damage Aboriginal places or objects.

Following review of the further information provided by the proponent, the Conservator of Flora and Fauna and ACT Heritage Council provided comments which support the application subject to conditions.

### 3.1.4 Recommended mitigation measures

The recommended mitigation measures from the Authority’s assessment, entity submissions and the studies submitted by the proponent against the impacts of the development are included in the following sections.

### 3.2 Schedule 4 Part 4.3 Item 1- Impacts on species or ecological communities

The proposal involves creating a ‘work area’ of approximately 400m² around each new pole of the three poles within the woodland area, resulting in removal of 1,200m² of White Box-Yellow Box Blakely Red Gum Grassy Woodland (BGW). In addition, modification of vegetation along the route is required to ensure the trees do not present a risk to the transmission lines which would result in modification of 7,500m² of BGW. Figures 3 and 4 include information of the proposed new poles and transmission line.
Figure 3 – proposed new poles and electrical line

Figure 4 – proposed new poles and electrical line
The section 211 application report stated that the proposal is likely to affect on some threatened woodland birds listed in table 6 that likely to forage or breed in the locality. However, the report further stated that the proposed development is unlikely to significantly impact these species, provided they are not utilising the habitat for breeding at the time the works are undertaken. The ecological study recommends that a further survey in spring will better assess the impact of the proposed development upon the identified threatened species.

The proponent submitted a targeted spring flora survey report as part of revised application. The report states that the flora survey conducted on 25 October 2016 confirmed that implementation of recommended measures will ensure that the works avoid impacts to any of the significant species recorded.

Table 6  threatened species within the area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Status Commonwealth</th>
<th>Status ACT</th>
<th>Likelihood of occurrence</th>
<th>Type/ value of habitat within study area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthochaera phrygia Regent Honeyeater</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Foraging habitat only – low significance given the extensive habitat in the locality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climacteris picumnus victoriae Brown Treecreeper (eastern subspecies)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Foraging habitat with a small potential for breeding to occur within or adjacent to the study area. Survey for nesting activity recommended prior to clearance of vegetation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daphoenositta chrysoptera Varied Sittella</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Foraging habitat with a very low potential for breeding within or adjacent to the study area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grantiella picta Painted Honeyeater</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Potential foraging habitat only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hieraetus morphnoides Little Eagle</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Foraging habitat. Unlikely to breed within the study area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lathamus discolor Swift Parrot</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Potential foraging habitat only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanodryas cucullata cucullata Hooded Robin (south-eastern form)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Potential foraging and breeding habitat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petroica boodang Scarlet Robin</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Potential foraging and breeding habitat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lalage sueurii White-winged Triller</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Potential foraging and breeding habitat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mammals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.1 Impacts

Box Gum Woodland
The activities associated with the proposed development which will potentially impact on Box Gum Woodland are:

- Removal of approximately 1,200m² of BGW.
- Modifications of approximately 7,500m² of vegetation along the powerline to ensure the trees do not present a risk to the transmission line.

Threatened flora or fauna species

The activities associated with the proposed development which will potentially impact on threatened fauna are:

- A small area of clearing required to carry out the works could result in a minor loss of habitat for the some threatened fauna.
- Impact on some threatened or rare flora species that were not identified at the time of site survey.
- Weed spread during construction.

3.2.2 Previous studies and investigation

Three studies have been submitted by the proponent to address impacts on species and ecological communities in support of the request for an EIS exemption. The information submitted by the proponent to support the application is listed and assessed for relevance against the requirements of section 211H of the PD Act in Table 7.

Table 7 – Previous studies 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Reasoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Dasyurus maculatus maculatus</em> &lt;br&gt; Spot-tailed Quoll</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pteropus poliocephalus</em> &lt;br&gt; Grey-headed Flying Fox</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Leucochrysum albicans var. tricolor</em> &lt;br&gt; Hoary Sunray</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is considered that these studies provide sufficient detail to allow an assessment of the environmental impacts associated with the proposal.

### 3.2.3 Key findings

The key findings in the EIS exemption application supporting information are:

- The area was assessed as supporting BGW.
- No threatened fauna species were recorded during the field survey, however one EPBC Act listed endangered flora species, Hoary Sunray *Leucochrysum albicans var. Tricolor* was recorded within the area.
- A number of plant species classified as ‘rare or uncommon flora species in ACT’ have been recorded in the locality.
- The majority of the threatened species with potential breeding or high quality foraging habitat within the subject area are threatened woodland birds.
- The area of rocky habitat may support some fauna.
- Movement of trucks onto and through the transmission easement has the potential to transport weeds into the area.

### 3.2.4 Entity referral and public comments

The Conservator of Flora and Fauna provided comments on the proposal which related to impacts on species or ecological communities. The comments are summarised below:

The impact assessment of flora undertaken by Capital Ecology is comprehensive and the recommended mitigation measures are supported. However, the application for an exemption from an EIS is not supported because broader impacts that will eventuate from the clearance of trees within the approximately 300m x 30m wide powerline corridor have not been adequately considered. Mitigating actions and how they would be implemented have not been detailed.

After reviewing the further information provided by the proponent, the Conservator of Flora and Fauna provided further comments on 22 February 2017. The comments stated that the measures in
the Weed Management Plan submitted by the proponent are supported, in addition to the measures committed to in the ecological studies submitted in the draft EIS Exemption application. The comments confirmed that the EIS exemption is supported subject to the following condition:

- Within areas mapped as critically endangered Box Gum Woodland (Zones 1 and 2 of Figure 3 of the Ecological report) perennial weed cover during the two year program will be less than 10% of the ground cover.

3.2.5 Recommended mitigation measures
The recommended mitigation measures from the Authority’s assessment, entity submissions and the studies submitted by the proponent against the impacts of the development on species or ecological communities are included in Table 8.
### Table 8 - Mitigation measures – impacts on species or ecological communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Impact of development</th>
<th>Mitigation Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1      | Impact on BGW         | Disturbance associated with the proposed development must be minimised to the extent necessary to carry out the works. Specific measures include:  
- The defined pole installation disturbance areas will be established and demarcated at each power pole site prior to works commencing  
- Vegetation removal and soil disturbance will be limited to the fullest extent practicable-only woody vegetation that is required to be removed for the easement and pole locations will be removed, and the ground storey will not be disturbed except within the 20x20m pole installation disturbance areas, within which disturbance will be minimised.  
- Relevant information regarding the significance and sensitivities of the relevant ecological values, particularly BGW will be communicated to contractors via toolbox talks and inductions. |
| 2      | Impact on some threatened or rare flora species that were not identified at the time of site survey. |  
- Demarcate the population of Silky Swainson-pea and Yam Daisy prior to commencing works.  
- Inform contractors to avoid the demarcated area to prevent disturbance of the plants.  
- Undertake weed control following the works to control high-risk weeds within the study area, using a local contractor experienced in avoiding sensitive species. |
| 3      | Loss of habitat of some fauna species (mainly woodland birds). |  
- Rocky areas are not to be removed.  
- Vegetation clearance and power pole installation works undertaken outside of the breeding season.  
- Undertake survey in spring to better assess the impacts on fauna species.  
- Recommendations arising from future spring survey must be implemented. |
| 4      | Weed spread.          |  
- Measures recommended in the Weed Management Plan must be implemented during all works.  
- Within areas mapped as critically endangered BGW (Zones 1 and 2 of figure 3 of the Ecological report) perennial weed cover during the two year program will be less than 10% of the ground cover. |
3.2.6 Conclusion
The supporting studies and the comments of relevant entities provide sufficient information on the impacts of the proposal on species or ecological communities.

Further investigation and environmental assessment of the impacts of the proposal on species and ecological communities is not required for this project. The conditions attached to this EIS exemption will be applied through conditions of approval on any subsequent development application.

3.3 Other potential Schedule 4 items

3.3.1 Schedule 4 Part 4.3 Item 2–native vegetation clearance
The proponent identified this item as a potential trigger but determined that this trigger is not applicable as it is considered that the proposed development will not require the clearing of more than 0.5ha of native vegetation on in a native vegetation area, other than on land that is not designated as a future urban area.

The proponent stated that the proposal will result in the modification (removal of mid and overstorey species) of 7,330m² of native vegetation. However the maximum extent of clearance of native vegetation will be restricted to the defined pole installation disturbance areas, excluding the pole located adjacent to the compound fence which is a disturbed gravel area with some exotic groundcover. The combined area of the native vegetation within defined pole installation disturbance areas is 1,159m². On this basis, the proponent stated that the project would not trigger Schedule 4 Part 4.3 Item 2.

3.3.2 Impacts
The identified impacts related to native vegetation clearance are:

- Modification (removal of mid and overstorey species) of 7,330m² of native vegetation along the powerline corridor to ensure the trees do not present a risk to the transmission lines.
- Removal of approximately 1,200m² of native vegetation due to the creating of a ‘work area’ around the proposed poles.

3.3.3 Previous studies and investigations
One study has been submitted by the proponent to address impacts on species and ecological communities in support of the request for an EIS exemption. The information submitted by the proponent to support the application is listed and assessed for relevance against the requirements of section 211H of the PD Act in Table 6.

3.3.4 Key findings
Approximately 0.12 ha of native vegetation will be removed for the construction of the working areas around the proposed poles. In addition, some minor vegetation modification and/or removal may be required along the powerline route to ensure the trees do not present a risk to the transmission line.
3.3.5 Entity referral and public comments

The Conservator of Flora and Fauna provided comments on the proposal which related to impacts on this trigger. The comments received for the draft EIS exemption suggested that more information is required to consider broader impacts that will eventuate from the clearance of trees within the approximately 300m x 30m wide powerline corridor. After reviewing the further information provided by the proponent, the Conservator of Flora and Fauna provided further comments that the proposal is supported subject to conditions.

3.3.6 Recommended mitigation measures

The recommended mitigation measures for the impacts of the development on native vegetation identified in the Authority’s assessment, entity submissions and the reports submitted by the proponent are in Table 9.

Table 9 - Mitigation measures – native vegetation clearance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Impact of development</th>
<th>Mitigation Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1      | Removal of approximately 1,200m² of native vegetation due to the creating of a ‘work area’ around the proposed poles. | Disturbance associated with the proposed development must be minimised to the extent necessary to carry out the works. Specific measures include:  
- The defined pole installation disturbance areas will be established and demarcated at each power pole site prior to works commencing  
- Vegetation removal and soil disturbance will be limited to the fullest extent practicable – only woody vegetation that is required to be removed for the easement and pole locations will be removed, and the ground storey will not be disturbed except within the 20m x 20m pole installation disturbance areas, within which disturbance will be minimised.  
- Relevant information regarding the significance and sensitivities of the relevant ecological values, particularly BGW will be communicated to contractors via toolbox talks and inductions. |
| 2      | Modification (removal of mid and overstorey species) of 7,330 m² of native vegetation along the powerline corridor to ensure the trees do not present a risk to the transmission lines. |  
- Weed management measures must be implemented during all works.  
- Within areas mapped as critically endangered BGW ( Zones 1 and 2 of figure 3 of the ecological report) perennial weed cover during the two year program will be less than 10% of the ground cover. |

3.3.7 Conclusion

The supporting studies and the comments of relevant entities provide sufficient information on the impacts of the proposal on native vegetation.
Further investigation and environmental assessment of the impacts of the proposal on native vegetation is not considered necessary for this project. The conditions attached to this EIS exemption will be applied through conditions of approval on any subsequent development application.

4. Other potential environmental impacts
Although construction of electricity transmission line and impact on ecological community and endangered species are the two identified triggers for this proposal, the EIS exemption application has also addressed a number of other matters such as land visual impact, impact on heritage places and water quality, as identified through the preliminary risk assessment.

This section summarises the potential impacts of the development on the environment other than those impacts which are impact track triggers discussed in Section 3.

4.1 Visual impact
The new route alignment will be at right-angles to the travelling public along the Monaro Highway and will cross the highway at the point where there are existing electrical conductors crossing the highway. The proposed works within the existing TransGrid substation are unlikely to change the existing view of the substation significantly.

4.1.1 Impacts
The following potential impacts were identified:

- Visual impact of the new route on road users of Monaro Highway.
- Visual impact of the works on the surrounding area.

4.1.2 Recommended mitigation measures
The key commitments and mitigation measures recommended in the reports accompanying the application and by the proponent are:

- Use of poles rather than ‘lattice’ towers.
- Conductors configured in a vertical arrangement.
- Crossing of highway immediately adjacent to existing conductors.
- The electrical line must be designed to achieve a minimum ground clearance of 7m.
- Use aluminium conductors that subjected to a sand-blasting technique known as ‘shadow-lining’ to produce an aged finish with a very dull sheen.

4.2 Aboriginal cultural heritage
The Heritage Assessment undertaken by Past Traces (23 May 2016) states that there is no registered Aboriginal or historical heritage sites are located within the project area. In addition, no areas of potential archaeological deposits or scarred trees have been identified within the development area. The proponent also stated that the potential for unidentified historical or Aboriginal heritage objects within the development area is low.
Comments received from the ACT Heritage Council on 31 January 2017 state that further information is required to determine whether the proposed development will damage Aboriginal places or objects.

After receiving the ‘Cultural Heritage Assessment and Statement of Heritage Effects Williamsdale Electricity Easement, ACT’ (Past Traces, 9 February 2017) that was submitted to the ACT Heritage Council on 10 February 2017, the ACT Heritage Council provided further comments which state that the application is supported subject to conditions.

4.2.1 Impacts
The following potential impacts were identified:

- Loss of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage items.
- Loss/Damage to Historical items.

4.2.2 Recommended mitigation measures
The recommended mitigation measures from the application assessment, entity comments and supporting documents submitted by the proponent are:

- In the event that Aboriginal places or objects are encountered during works, the Unexpected Discovery Plan presented in Past Traces (9 February 2017) is to be implemented, and the ACT Heritage Council advised of the discovery within five working days.

4.3 Impact on waterway
The Murrumbidgee River is located approximately 1.2 km from the proposed construction site. A small, (seasonal) drainage line – gully is located within approximately 20m of the proposed Williamsdale 132kV connection worksite.

4.3.1 Impacts
The following potential impacts were identified:

- Changes to water quality due to potential contamination, erosion and sedimentation.
- Changes to water quantity due to clearance of vegetation, reshaping of some of the land and/or blockage of creekline.

4.2.3 Recommended mitigation measures
The recommended mitigation measures from the application assessment, entity comments and supporting documents submitted by the proponent are:

- Vehicle and equipment parking/ storage sites to be established in previously disturbed areas.
- Measures must be in place for site storage/stockpiling.
- An Environmental Management Plan must be prepared to include sediment and erosion control plan, vehicle and equipment wash down management plan, chemical management plan and other related management plans.
5. EIS exemption conditions

Table 10 details the conditions that are proposed to be set if an EIS exemption is granted. These conditions should be taken into account by the planning and land authority when assessing a DA for the proposal.
Table 10 – Conditions for development approval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Endorsement/ approval</th>
<th>Development stage</th>
<th>Condition of approval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unexpected Discovery Plan</td>
<td>ACT Heritage Council</td>
<td>During development</td>
<td>In the event that Aboriginal places or objects are encountered during works, the Unexpected Discovery Plan presented in Past Traces (9 February 2017) is to be implemented, and the ACT Heritage Council advised of the discovery within five working days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Weed Management Plan</td>
<td>Conservator of Flora and Fauna</td>
<td>During development</td>
<td>Measures recommended in the Weed Management Plan must be implemented during all works. Within areas mapped as critically endangered BGW (Zones 1 and 2 of figure 3 of the Ecological report) perennial weed cover during the two year program will be less than 10% of the ground cover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Construction Environment Management Plan</td>
<td>Transport Canberra and City Services Environment Protection Authority Conservator of Flora and Fauna Utility Regulation, Access Canberra</td>
<td>Prior to development</td>
<td>An Environmental Management Plan must be prepared to include sediment and erosion control plan, vehicle and equipment wash down management plan, chemical management plan and other related management plans.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Conclusion
Having regard to the supporting information provided by the applicant and comments received from referral entities and during the public consultation period the planning and land authority has assessed the Williamsdale 132 kV Electrical Line Connection project as meeting for an EIS exemption under the PD Act.

It is the planning and land authority’s assessment that the proponent has provided sufficient information to the ACT Government and the community to allow an informed evaluation of potential environmental impacts which could be attributed to the proposal. The supporting information and referral entities have proposed a range of mitigation measures and conditions to reduce or avoid potential environmental impacts arising from construction and operational activities associated with the project. It is considered that any potential adverse impacts can be adequately addressed by implementing the conditions outlined in this report.

The planning and land authority’s recommendation is that the supporting information submitted with the application has adequately identified and considered those matters of potentially significant impact and that further environmental assessment is not required.

The planning and land authority’s recommendation is that the Minister grants Williamsdale 132 kV Electrical Line Connection project an EIS exemption under section 211H of the PD Act.
Appendix 1 – Referral Entity Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>EPSDD assessment notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservator of Flora and Fauna</td>
<td>The measures in Section 4.0 in the Weed Management Plan and the measures committed to in the ecological studies are supported. The EIS exemption is supported subject to the following condition:</td>
<td>It is noted that the Conservator of Flora and Fauna supports the EIS exemption application subject to conditions. This requirement will be applied as a condition on any future DAs. It has been identified as a condition in this assessment report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Services Commissioner</td>
<td>No comments.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCA</td>
<td>No comments.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Council</td>
<td>The ACT Heritage Council supports the EIS exemption, as the heritage values of the place have been established in prior studies, and as these studies are sufficient to inform an assessment of potential heritage impacts of the proposed activity. The Council notes that while only two heritage places remain within the application area, a number of Aboriginal places and objects have been previously recorded and salvaged within this area, and the application area has potential to contain additional Aboriginal places and objects. In this context, the Council identifies the following condition: • An ‘Unanticipated Discovery Protocol’ (UDP) is required for the project, to set out how any additional Aboriginal places or objects encountered will be managed in accordance with Heritage Act 2004 provisions. This UDP should be submitted to and endorsed by the Council prior to the commencement of works.</td>
<td>It is noted that the Heritage Council supports the EIS exemption application subject to conditions. This requirement will be applied as a condition on any future DAs. It has been identified as a condition in this assessment report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCCS</td>
<td>TCCS acknowledges that adequate studies have been undertaken and sufficient documentation has been prepared to support the application for EIS exemption.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Directorate</td>
<td>No comments on the request for an EIS exemption.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>