

ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OPINION

An application for an Environmental Significance Opinion (ESO) has been received under section 138 of the *Planning Act 2023* (the Act). In accordance with section 140(4) of the Act, I provide the following environmental significance opinion:

APPLICANT

WSP, as represented by Helen Sloane.

PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

The project proposes maintenance works on the ACT section of Transmission Line 6, involving 11 towers in the north-west of the ACT, crossing the Dunlop Grasslands Nature Reserve and Jarramlee Grasslands Nature Reserve. The project involves essential maintenance to change out the existing Overhead Earth Wire (OHEW) with Optical Ground Wire (OPGW). An OPGW essentially provides both grounding (earthing) for the transmission line as well as a path for high-speed telecommunications along the transmission lines.

LOCATION

Multiple: Block 3 and Section 85 Strathnairn; Block 8 Section 3 Macnamara; Blocks 1422, 1608, 1620, 1621, 1622 Belconnen; Block 2 Section 186 Dunlop.

MATTERS TO WHICH THIS OPINION APPLIES

This opinion applies only to the development proposal as described in the application.

OPINION

Provided the works are undertaken in a manner consistent with the following conditions, they are unlikely to cause a significant adverse environmental impact.

This opinion is granted subject to the following conditions made under section 140(4) of the Act.

- Following DA approval, a Construction and Environment Management Plan (CEMP) addressing the matters subject to the *Environment Protection Act 1997* must be submitted to Environment Protection Authority (EPA) for endorsement prior to commencement of work.
- Any work which meets the criteria in Schedule 1 of the *Environment Protection Act 1997* must have an Environmental Authorisation from the EPA.

Attached is a Statement of Reasons for the decision.

George Cilliers, Chief Planner
Territory Planning Authority
18 September 2026

STATEMENT OF REASONS

The proposed development is a proposal mentioned in Schedule 1 of the *Planning (General) Regulation 2023* – development proposals requiring environmental impact assessment, being:

Part 1.2 item 23 -proposal involving land included on the register of contaminated sites under the *Environment Protection Act 1997*.

The proponent is seeking an environmental significance opinion to remove the requirement for an environmental impact statement on the grounds that the proposal is not likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact, and has applied to the Territory Planning Authority for an opinion to that effect.

Meaning of *significant* adverse environmental impact – *Planning Act 2023*, section 104

An adverse environmental impact is ***significant*** if—

- (a) the environmental function, system, value or entity that might be adversely impacted by a proposed development is significant; or
- (b) the cumulative or incremental effect of a proposed development might contribute to a substantial adverse impact on an environmental function, system, value or entity.

In deciding whether an adverse environmental impact is ***significant***, the following matters must be taken into account:

- (a) the kind, size, frequency, intensity, scope and length of time of the impact;
- (b) the sensitivity, resilience and rarity of the environmental function, system, value or entity likely to be affected.

In deciding whether a development proposal is likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact it does not matter whether the adverse environmental impact is likely to occur on the site of the development or elsewhere.

CONSULTATION WITH ENTITIES

In deciding whether a development proposal is likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact the Territory Planning Authority consulted with entities, in accordance with section 139 (1) of the Act. Entity responses are provided below:

Work health and safety commissioner

The Work Health and Safety Commissioner does not have any comments on the proposed works identified in this application for an Environmental Significance Opinion (reference ESO 202600031).

This response has been provided on the basis of the information contained in documents which had been made available to WorkSafe ACT for the Work Health and Safety Commissioner's consideration by the Impact Assessment unit as at 11.02 am on Thursday 13 August 2026.

This response does not take into account any subsequent changes to those documents, nor any other information held by the Impact Assessment unit.

In providing this response, the Work Health and Safety Commissioner is not approving or endorsing any proposed work arrangements or any proposed risk control measures, and nothing in this response affects the safety duties of persons who may be involved in carrying out the proposed work under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

Environment Protection Authority

EPA support the ESO.

Following DA approval, a Construction and Environment Management Plan (CEMP) addressing the matters subject to the Environment Protection Act 1997 must be submitted to EPA for endorsement prior to commencement of work.

Any work which meets the criteria in Schedule 1 of the Environment Protection Act 1997 must have an Environmental Authorisation from the Environment Protection Authority.

Emergency Services Commissioner

ACTSES has reviewed the subject DA and have no comments or objections.

Any previous commentary remains valid and expected of this DA.

Technical Regulator

Assessment of the proposed development

UTR considers that the proposed works do not fall within the categories requiring UTR assessment under the Planning (General) Regulation 2023, including:

1) Item no 2 – Proposal that involves:

- a) electricity transmission line construction, including additions or realignment works, exceeding 500m in length, that are intended to carry underground or above-ground transmission lines with a voltage of 132kV or more*
- b) Most electricity generating stations, including
 - from coal*
 - from other energy sources, such as gas, solar and wind that can supply more than 10MW to 20 MW of power*
 - any that discharges water that is likely to vary a receiving water body's temperature by more than 2°C.**
- c) Electricity storage facilities (e.g. batteries) that can supply more than 150MW of power.*

2) Item no 3 – water storage dams

3) Item no 7 – wastewater treatment plants

Accordingly, the project does not require an environmental impact assessment in relation to the above matters.

UTR position

UTR supports the Environmental Significance Opinion. UTR notes that the proposal involves replacement of an existing overhead earth wire with an optical ground wire on existing transmission infrastructure and does not involve new transmission line construction, realignment, increased transmission capacity or other utility infrastructure within UTR's regulatory remit. Any potential environmental impacts are expected to be limited to temporary construction and access-related activities, which are matters more appropriately considered by relevant environmental agencies.

Director-General of ACT Health

The Health Protection Service (HPS) notes that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is expected to be prepared and implemented to address any likelihood of adverse environmental impact that could affect the multiply areas the transmission lines traverse.

There are no public health concerns in relation to the ESO Application over multiply locations.

POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The proposed project involves maintenance works on the ACT section of Transmission Line 6, involving 11 towers in the north-west of the ACT, crossing the Dunlop Grasslands Nature Reserve and Jarramlee Grasslands Nature Reserve.

The proposed maintenance works occur within three blocks listed on the ACT Register of Contaminated Sites:

- Belconnen 0/1622 (Ginninderry Development Area)
- Belconnen 0/1621 (Ginninderry Development Area)
- Belconnen 186/2 (part of Ginninderry Audit Area 2)

Potential impacts include the accidental disturbance and spread of contaminated soil during vehicle access and maintenance activities. However, the works are minor and temporary, involving no excavation, soil removal, or significant ground disturbance. With implementation of the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and existing site management controls, impacts are expected to be minor and manageable, and are unlikely to result in significant adverse environmental effects.

No significant adverse public health, utility, or safety impacts have been identified by consulted entities.

It has been demonstrated that if the works are undertaken in a manner consistent with the above conditions attached to the ESO, they are unlikely to cause a significant adverse environmental impact.