



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Friday, 4 January 2008

The Honourable Geoff Wilson MP  
Minister for Mines and Energy  
Member for Ferny Grove  
PO Box 15216  
City East QLD 4002

Dear Minister

**RE: Powerlink's proposed Woolooga – Cooroy South powerline**

As you are aware, we have commenced community consultation on this project, and have attended a public meeting in Cooroy (chaired by the Member for Nicklin and local MP, Peter Wellington) and have held two Community Information 'Drop-in' Days.

A group of property owners whose properties are likely to be affected by the new line have formed a protest group, known as Powerlink Action Group Eumundi (PAGE). PAGE has published a handout (Attachment 1) which encourages recipients to write to you and to sign a petition. However, the PAGE handout contains a large number of factual errors and misleading statements, which are outlined in Attachment 2.

Clearly, many of the people who sign the petition and/or who write to you or your Ministerial colleagues are likely to be doing so on the basis of the false and misleading content of the handout.

In the 12-plus years that I have been in this role, I have encountered material from several different protest groups. That material is typically styled on hyperbole, exaggeration, and emotive language. The PAGE handout exemplifies that genre.

However, the number of errors and misleading statements in the PAGE handout far exceeds anything I have sighted from any protest group over the past 12 years. The scaremongering content which seeks to alarm communities far distant from the proposed powerline is particularly deceitful and dishonest.

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Powerlink Queensland is the registered business name of the  
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Whilst Powerlink will provide (and in many cases, re-provide) the correct information in its future newsletters on this project, I would suggest that the correspondence you receive should be considered in the light of the misleading content of the PAGE handout from which the correspondence may derive.

I have decided to copy this letter to Mr Wellington MP, PAGE, and the Member for Maroochydore.

Yours sincerely



Gordon Jardine  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

CC: Member for Nicklin, Peter Wellington MP;  
Member for Maroochydore, Fiona Simpson MP,  
**Powerlink Action Group Eumundi (PAGE).**



# SAVE EUMUNDI

## SAY NO TO GIANT POWER PYLONS

Powerlink is planning to ruin the beauty of the countryside around Eumundi with 12km of 65m high power pylons (that's over 200 feet tall!)

### If Powerlink proceeds with its plans:

- Eerwah Vale, Belli and Ridgewood (Tourist Route 22 on the way to Kenilworth) - an area of outstanding natural beauty that residents and visitors love and enjoy - will be ruined forever;
- Wildlife corridors will be destroyed;
- The uglification of the Hinterland can only decrease property value throughout the area - for some properties by a massive amount, but decreases for us all;
- The health of local residents could be harmed by electro-magnetic fields that recent studies suggest may cause cancer. Tobacco companies swore their product didn't cause cancer. Asbestos companies swore their product didn't cause cancer. Now Powerlink swears the same - in the face of compelling studies undertaken in 2007 that suggest otherwise;
- Powerlink's current plans will lead to a 500% increase in the power supply to the Sunshine Coast, when population projections indicate that only 30% will be necessary into the future. The possibility of this project being used to power the much-opposed Bridges Industrial Estate has been suggested as a reason for the planned over-supply of power. A potential desalination plant at Peregrine has also been rumoured.
- Should these projects be the reason for the massive over-supply of power currently planned, residents on the eastern side of Eumundi also face the prospect of giant power pylons cutting a swathe through their land, together with the land owned by residents in Doonan and Verrierdale. If the initial fight is lost on the western outskirts of Eumundi, the continuation of this monstrous blight through other pristine areas of the Hinterland appears inevitable.

**PLEASE HELP THE EUMUNDI COMMUNITY FIGHT TO PROTECT THE BEAUTY OF THIS REGION**

### You can support the Powerlines Action Group Eumundi (PAGE) in its campaign by:

- Offering your skills or services - from fundraising to technical EIS analysis to leaflet or poster printing or even volunteering to hand out this flyer at Eumundi Markets or include it in your school or organisation's newsletter;
- Signing our petition - or taking a page of the petition to gather signatures yourself;
- Providing a donation to our fighting fund;
- Writing to relevant Ministers and Shadow Ministers to ask questions about why such an over-supply of power is considered necessary, why the State Government is not committed to the same sustainable energy principles that Federal Labor advocates, and why scenic amenity, wildlife corridors and public health issues are being ignored in Powerlink's plan.

For more information or to volunteer your help, write to PAGE at [contact@saveeumundi.org](mailto:contact@saveeumundi.org) or PO Box 950, Cooroy 4563.

[www.saveeumundi.org](http://www.saveeumundi.org)

## ATTACHMENT 2

### Errors and misleading statements in the Powerlink Action Group Eumundi (PAGE) "Save Eumundi" document

1. PAGE says: Powerlink is planning.....12km of 65m high power pylons

Error/misleading content: There will NOT be 12km of 65m high towers. Powerlink has advised the community that as a general rule, the typical height of the structures will be about 45 metres, and that Powerlink only uses taller towers or poles in locations where there is a net environmental benefit in having the conductors above the vegetation canopy (e.g. if the vegetation is of very high value and this outweighs the visual impact of taller towers). The EIS may recommend some 65m structures, or maybe even none - but certainly not 12km at that height.

2. PAGE says: Localities on Tourist Route 22 (Kenilworth - Eumundi Road) will be "ruined forever".

Error/misleading content: The proposed alignment for the line was specifically chosen to avoid the denser concentrations of houses, and to not be too close to major roads, so as to minimise visual impacts. The proposed alignment is not close to Route 22 – the distance ranges from 800m to nearly 2km.

With regard to the "ruined forever" statement, there are numerous thriving and growing towns and locations throughout Queensland where a transmission line is much closer to a major road than this one, and has been for years.

3. PAGE says: Wildlife corridors will be destroyed.

Error/misleading content: Transmission lines built to modern day standards do NOT destroy wildlife corridors. In fact, modern day designs, which take into account the *Vegetation Management Act*, seek to preserve corridor connectivity. There are many examples of preserved wildlife corridors around transmission lines, including in and around the World Heritage-listed Wet Tropics in North Queensland.

4. PAGE says: The line...can only decrease property values throughout the area – for some properties by a massive amount.

Error/misleading content: Powerlink pays compensation to property owners who have an easement taken over their property based on the "before" and "after" value impact. Consequently, they do not experience a net financial loss.

Powerlink is not aware of any evidence to suggest that the development of new transmission infrastructure has any sustained material impact on the value of nearby properties. Understandably, when plans for new infrastructure are announced some uncertainty about the possible impacts can arise. However, after initial planning stages are completed and the new line or substation is constructed, we have no evidence to suggest there is any sustained material impact on the values of nearby properties.

5. PAGE says: The health of local residents could be harmed by EMFs (Electric and Magnetic Fields).

Error/misleading content: EMFs exist in all houses and offices, and thus the residents are already exposed to EMFs in their daily lives, and have been for their entire lives. The level of EMFs at a distance of 50 metres from the proposed line is about the same as found in a

typical house. At 100 metres from the line, the EMFs are so small that they cannot be measured.

Based on the current proposed alignment, there are only two (2) houses in the Eerwah Vale area within 100m of the line. Consistent with Powerlink's long standing "prudent avoidance" approach, the final alignment will remain at least 50 metres away from these two houses (and therefore, the exposure to EMF from the line in these two houses will be on par with EMF levels found in a typical house). Furthermore, should the final alignment be within 100 metres of these two houses, Powerlink will provide the owners with an opportunity to sell their properties to Powerlink, thereby giving the owners the right to choose whether they wish to remain living there or not.

6. PAGE implies: EMFs pose a similar health risk to cigarette smoking and asbestos.

Error/misleading content: Electric and magnetic fields (EMF) are present wherever there is electricity – including in the home, office, and worksite, and around transmission lines. Powerlink recognises there is community interest regarding EMF and health and relies on expert advice on this matter from competent health authorities in Australia and from around the world. Powerlink follows a prudent avoidance approach when designing new electricity infrastructure, which includes not locating overhead transmission lines close to homes, schools and community facilities where possible.

Medical science shows that the (proven) health risk from cigarette smoking and asbestos is vastly different to the (hypothesised) risk from EMFs.

In the case of cigarette smoking and asbestos, epidemiological studies (which test the statistical correlation between a disease outcome and a causal agent) show a consistently strong statistical correlation between cancer and a causal agent (smoking, asbestos). In contrast, epidemiological studies on EMFs show either no or weak statistical correlation.

In terms of physiological studies (which seek to explain how the potential causal agent affects the components and functioning of the human body), again there is a clear and demonstrable explanation for the observed effects of cigarette smoking and asbestos. In contrast, there is no demonstrable explanation for how EMFs affect the components and functioning of the human body.

In any event, apart from a small number of houses in the Eerwah Vale area which may be within 100 metres of the line (currently two), all other houses in the area are outside the range of the EMF from the powerline. People living in those houses have for years been exposed to EMFs from their appliances and house wiring.

7. PAGE says: Powerlink's plans will lead to a 500% increase in the power supply to the Sunshine Coast.

Error/misleading content: This is a speculative estimate not sourced from Powerlink. Powerlink is required, under its licence, to build its network to an N-1 standard, which means that the network must be able to deliver the maximum future demand, even with the largest circuit out of service. It is the N-1 capability of the network which is relevant in comparison with the future demand.

The new line will significantly increase the supply capability, because there has not been a bulk supply upgrade to the area for over 40 years (50 years by the time the new line is in service), and the electricity demand in that time has increased by over 500%.

8. PAGE says: Population projections indicate that only a 30% increase in electricity supply will be necessary into the future.

Error/misleading content: Firstly, because of the long life of these assets (circa 50 years), the planning horizon for the future is very long. Secondly, it's not just population growth which drives electricity demand. On the back of air-conditioning, computers, large screen TVs etc; the average electricity consumption per household in South East Queensland has grown by 70% over the past 10 years. So, there is a compounding effect – a larger population and higher consumption per household.

9. PAGE implies: The new powerline may be needed to power the much-opposed Bridges Industrial Estate.

Error/misleading content: Suggested by whom? Certainly not by Powerlink, who has not considered the Bridges (or any other) particular industrial development in the network planning process. Such "suggestions" fit the classic mould of conspiracy theories.

10. PAGE says: "A potential desalination plant at Peregian has also been rumoured".

Error/misleading content: Conspiracy theory #2. Rumoured by whom? Again, certainly not by Powerlink. There is no consideration of any such desalination plant in any of Powerlink's load planning.

The clear intent of this misleading statement is to (mischievously) cause concern to the residents of Peregian (and points in between there and Eerwah Vale).

11. PAGE says: "Residents on the eastern side of Eumundi also face the prospect of giant power pylons cutting a swathe through their land, together with residents in Doonan and Verrierdale...this appears inevitable..."

Error/misleading content: This is blatant scare-mongering, for which there is absolutely no basis. Powerlink only has to deliver power to a new substation to be built at Eerwah Vale, south of Cooroy. Powerlink does not have to go east of the existing ENERGEX line, or east of Eumundi, or anywhere near Doonan (which is about 6km south-east of the proposed Powerlink line) or Verrierdale (which is about 6km north-east of the proposed Powerlink line).

12. PAGE says: "Save Eumundi"

Error/misleading content: The line is not exactly close to Eumundi. At its nearest point, it's about three km from Eumundi. It will not be visible from the township.