

**Energex Loganlea to Jimboomba Network Upgrade
Response to Supplementary IAR**

Closes 8 April 2010

Submission by

Logan and Albert Conservation Association

Prepared by

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Please send a written response to this submission to the address above and to
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The Logan and Albert Conservation Association (LACA) opposes the proposed new 110 KV sub transmission line from Loganlea to Jimboomba by Energex. LACA has numerous concerns in relation to the proposal and the Supplementary IAR that is open for comment until 9th April 2010. LACA's key concerns are outlined below. LACA supports the submission lodged by VETO (Veto Energex Towers Organisation).

LACA acknowledges that the new Supplementary IAR proposes to increase the underground section of the proposed powerline easement. LACA supports the undergrounding of powerlines, however we do not support the current route location. LACA does not support the use of the Logan River Bioregional Corridor as a powerline corridor. The Logan River **is not** currently a powerline easement and is a valuable environmental, agricultural and recreational asset that must be protected for future generations. The continuing proposal by Energex to use the Logan River as a possible powerline corridor that may then be upgraded in the future is unacceptable.

LACA's submission to the Draft IAR in 2009 outlined detailed concerns in relation to the proposed powerline corridor. LACA is not satisfied that all the concerns from that submission have been fully addressed by Energex.

LACA formally requests again that an alternate route be considered. LACA supports the undergrounding of powerlines and road corridors should be utilised for this rather than Energex continuing to propose further degradation of the Logan River and fragmentation of the regrowth and remnant vegetation around the Logan River and Camp Cable Rd.

1.0 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

LACA would like to object again to the community consultation process used by Energex that continues to disadvantage people in the area surrounding the proposed powerline route.

1. School holiday periods have been targeted during both consultation rounds and may not allow people the opportunity to participate in these

- Draft IAR consultation period was June to 3 July 2009 during school holidays
- Supplementary IAR released 17 March to 8 April 2010 again during the school holidays

2. The only people who received an Energex information pamphlet in this round of consultation (including information about the community open days at Logan Village) were people who had previously registered an Expression of Interest in 2008/9 with Energex, or previous submitters to the Draft IAR in 2009, or those who are directly affected land owners, or those who were lucky enough to see the advertisement in the local papers on the weeks when Energex did this. Other residents who have not been involved in any consultation up until this stage (eg some non directly affected residents along Anzac Avenue, Camp Cable Rd and Hotz Rd) have indicated in March 2010 that they have no knowledge of the proposed powerline route or the issues involved (Personal Communication).

2.0 LOGAN RIVER BIOREGIONAL CORRIDOR

Energex acknowledges in the Supplementary IAR (2010 p 136) that “community feedback received during the Public and Stakeholder consultation ... between 15 June 2009 and 3 July 2009 suggests a strong local preference to avoid the placement of subtransmission line infrastructure close to the Logan River”.

LACA does not support any river crossings for the Logan River. The removal of two river crossings are supported in the current Supplementary IAR, but do not go far enough in protecting this bioregional corridor that currently has **NO** powerlines crossing it. LACA is not convinced that Energex has genuinely considered all other plausible and feasible options available. If powerlines are approved for the Logan River , this will not prohibit the future expansion and upgrade of any future powerlines. Energex has clearly stated it has a policy of consolidating easements (Draft IAR 2009).

LACA cannot support this proposed route. All possible and feasible alternatives such as undergrounding along road corridors (e.g. Waterford-Tamborine Rd , Camp Cable Rd) need to be seriously considered as alternatives to

- Protect remnant and regrowth vegetation (width of corridor required is much smaller)
- Protect habitat for koalas and other species eg gliders, kangaroos, wallabies.
- To reduce the excessive cost of large poles to cross the river (the economic savings from 5 above ground crossings could offset undergrounding cost for a considerable section of an alternate route)
- Reduce compensation/acquisition costs to Energex
- Reduce Energex problems of private property access eg additional tracks on private property needing to be acquired and maintained
- Reduce scenic amenity and visual impacts for community and for tourists
- Reduced possibility of bushfires
- Increase security and reliability of power
- Reduction in EMF exposure if underground e.g. Logan Reserve State School
- Consolidating powerline easement and road corridor has a better environmental outcome – reduced further fragmentation and habitat loss in local area and region to increase habitat connectivity

3.0 KOALAS

1. No koala mapping has ever been conducted for the Logan River area or the Camp Cable Rd area. No koala mapping has been undertaken for the Mt Lindesay North Beaudesert Study Area . DERM acknowledges the value of GQAL as land suitable for rehabilitation for koala habitat. However, in the DERM koala mapping for the Logan River, the GQAL has not been acknowledged or included for its suitability for koala habitat area, rehabilitation or offsets area.

The history of this, as explained to Anita Sietas is that in 2008 Logan City Council budgeted for \$50 000 to match dollar for dollar with the EPA (now DERM) with the intention of conducting koala habitat assessment and surveys (to be conducted by the EPA) for the whole of the Mount Lindesay North Beaudesert Area . In late 2008 it was announced by State Government that they would conduct koala habitat mapping and this was conducted by consultants from GH and D. At this time, the \$50 000 from Logan City Council was redirected and no detailed local koala survey or habitat assessment

was conducted. The State Government Koala mapping did not include any detailed on ground assessment as part of this process and most work was conducted via desktop assessment. There has never been a koala habitat assessment or koala survey ever conducted for the Logan Reserve/Logan Village/Buccan/Chambers Flat/Camp Cable Rd area (in fact no koala surveys or mapping for any parts of the Mount Lindesay North Beaudesert Area under the previous Beaudesert Shire Council.

LACA would like to request funding from Energex and Powerlink to fund koala habitat assessment and surveys as an urgent priority. The methodology used must be compatible and consistent with that used by DERM (previously EPA) to be recognised for State level koala mapping.

2. Local sightings of koalas have been reported to Wildnet (DERM) and indicate significant sightings of koalas as reported by the community and scientific experts. Wildnet sightings reveal that there are numerous sightings of koalas to the north and south of **Camp Cable Rd** and east and west of **Waterford -Tamborine Rd**. RSPCA and residents have reported collecting dead and injured koalas from the vicinity of Camp Cable Rd and surrounding areas. There are already existing cleared easements for Powerlink easements (north of Camp Cable Rd) and Energex easements (south of Camp Cable Rd) that create barriers for koala movement and increase the length of time that koalas may spend moving over open ground and therefore place koalas at greater risk of cars and dog attack. Local residents along Camp Cable Rd have already noted a decline in visits by native animals as a result of the construction of the new alignment for Camp Cable Rd some years ago. Energex's own IAR report from June 2009 acknowledges that current powerline easements already fragment habitat and this proposed route will continue to fragment and degrade the habitat further with further negative impacts on local and regional significant fauna species such as koalas.

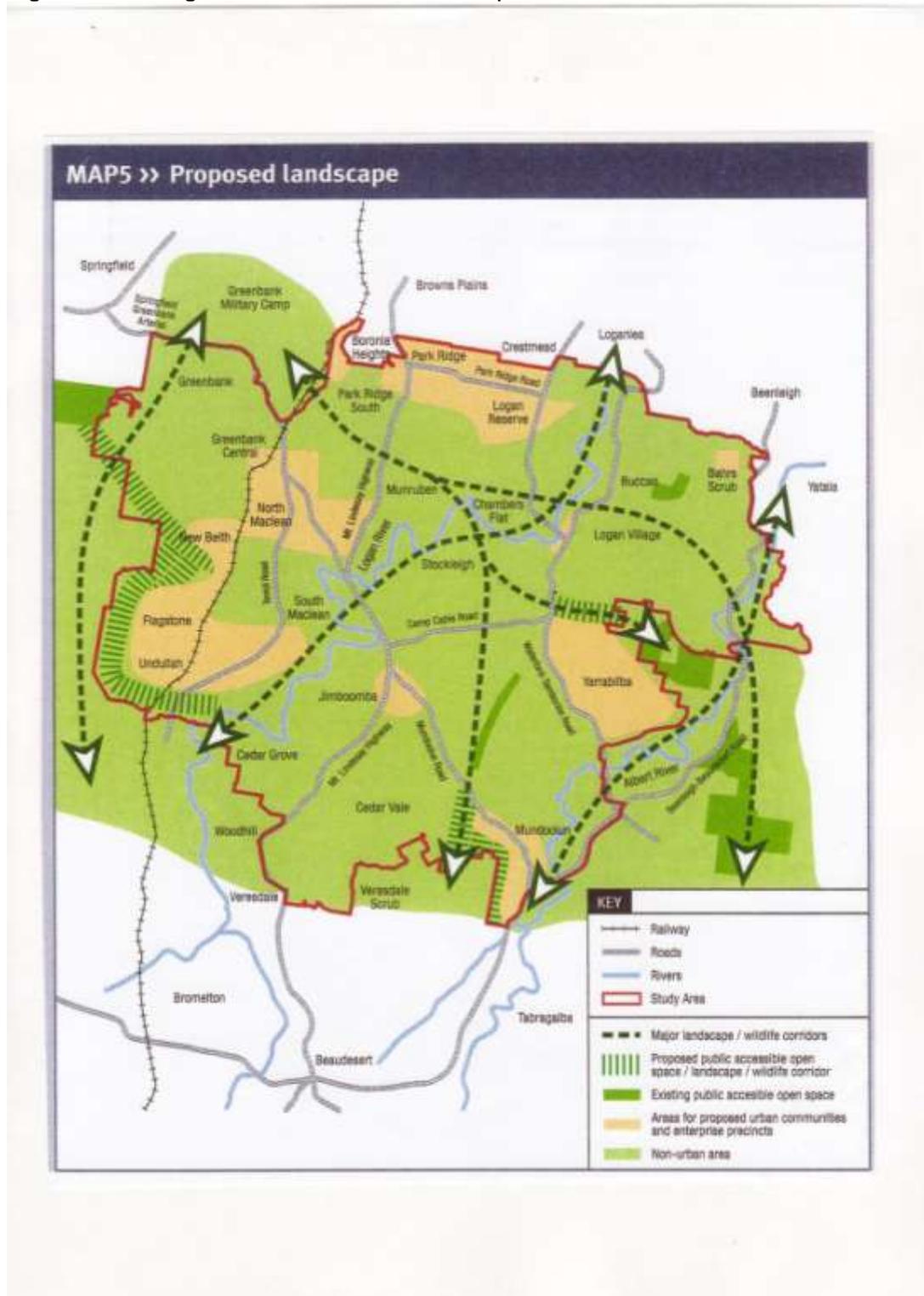
3. Additional **koala and wildlife sightings for the Camp Cable Road area** (December 2009 and March 2010) are from local residents and are shown in **Table 1**.

4. The Camp Cable Rd location shown in **Figure 1** has 2 bioregional corridors
- One corridor runs north to south approximately half way along Camp Cable Rd (providing local and regional linkages from the Greenbank Military Area to the Logan River and south to Birnam Range)
 - One corridor runs north-west to south-east close to the intersection of Waterford –Tamborine Rd and Camp Cable Rd (providing local and regional linkages from the Greenbank Military Area to Buccan Conservation Park and the Albert River .

These two bioregional corridors, along with the Logan River Bioregional corridor, need the highest level of habitat connectivity to reduce habitat fragmentation for local and regional flora and fauna species to ensure greater resilience in the event of climate change. The current Energex proposal fragments all three corridors and will have significant impacts on fauna species such as koalas.

5. Cumulative impacts of past powerline (Energex and Powerlink) and road infrastructure and proposed future and ongoing habitat clearing and fragmentation will not ensure the survival of koalas and other wildlife species (e.g. gliders) for the future. A co-ordinated plan is needed for the Logan River and Camp Cable Rd area in the MLNBA.

Figure 1 – Bioregional corridors around Camp Cable Rd



4.0 FLOODING CONCERNS

LACA is concerned that the Engineering report with flood modelling by Worley Parsons included limitations and did not include specific details about the Logan River that were communicated in the submissions by other long term residents and local farmers with knowledge of previous Logan River flood events. Local knowledge such as the narrowing of the widths of the Logan River, river volume, water flow, and other important flood events other than those modelled (such as 1974) should be used to refine flood modelling.

In the interests of community health and safety, LACA formally requests that the flood modelling be revisited to include information provided by the community to make the flood modeling more accurate.

5.0 INDIGENOUS CONSULTATION

LACA is concerned that this process is not proceeding, yet this is quoted as taking place in the Supplementary IAR.

6.0 WATER QUALITY CONCERNS

LACA is extremely concerned by the declining water quality in the Logan River Freshwater and Estuary (Supplementary IAR p 83) and does not support the further degradation of this through increased soil erosion, salinity and acid sulphate soils.

**Table 1 CAMP CABLE ROAD
RESIDENT WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS TO MARCH 2010**

Data reported by residents and collected by the Logan and Albert Conservation Association (contact Anne Page on ecoinfo@laca.org.au for more information) .