

PROPOSED ENEABBA–MOONYOONOOKA 330KV TRANSMISSION LINE

INFORMATION ON “STRAIGHT LINE” ROUTE

A “straight line” route may be perceived by stakeholders to be potentially a simpler and cheaper option. Western Power has responded to this issue on several occasions and would like to emphasise the following:

- The community weighted the economic, social and environmental sustainability principles at the Community Workshops. The information received from the very high proportion of agricultural interests that were involved in the process was incorporated in the corridor selection process.
- The sustainability principle “Minimise impacts on existing and potential land use” was highly weighted at 8.8 out of 10. Of the 32 principles, only four had a higher weighting. The principle was then scored at –3 for corridor 10 as opposed to –2 for corridor 4 to reflect the farmers concerns. As part of the sustainability assessment process, the community, for the economic principle named “Ensure the capital costs of the transmission line are minimised” weighted the principle as 6.1. Only 8 of the 32 sustainability principles scored lower. The comments from the community workshops were in line with this weighting, confirming that the community was much more concerned to ensure the best possible line route than the shortest or cheapest.
- A direct route was assessed independently of the corridor selection process, after taking on board comments received from a range of stakeholders. There were a number of major issues in the route that would have been eliminated a straight line from the analysis.
- Research indicates that additional costs would be incurred in a straight line by the need to avoid Eneabba townsite, AGL’s gas and petroleum field near Dongara and Iluka Resources’ mine to the south of Eneabba. There will also be additional financial and social costs due to a larger number of small landholdings, and potential additional compensation.
- Wherever the line is located, someone will be impacted (such as the farming community) including a straighter more direct route. Input was sought from stakeholders and the community regarding constraints and opportunities throughout the entire study area, which resulted in the 16 draft options being identified.
- The corridor selection process considered all elements required to make a holistic decision – social, environmental, economic and technical considerations.
- Western Power has consulted with the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) who commented that Beekeepers Nature Reserve is a major regional nature reserve and any development there would be considered incompatible with the intended purposes of nature conservation, as would adjoining conservation areas and Reserves.
- The DEC also advised that by way of an example that the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has advised the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DPI) in relation to the latter’s application for the expansion of the Dampier to Bunbury Natural Gas Pipeline Corridor, to locate the expanded corridor outside of the nature reserves given that there was a viable corridor elsewhere. This is the same area that would be impacted by a straight-line option.

- General advice has also indicated that development within any conservation estate or areas of significant remnant vegetation in the Mid West would be considered unacceptable because of the scarcity of natural vegetation in the region due to historical clearing practices.
- As part of the technical criteria assessed in the sustainability assessment, timing associated with the project's works program was considered to be an important issue. It was generally accepted that any vegetation clearing (as would most likely be required with a straight-line option) would be viewed as a significant issue by the EPA and thus would require significantly more time to assess the project.
- As such, If Western Power were to seek approvals to go through a conservation estate or high quality remnant vegetation, the time, associated additional costs, the cost and implications of load shedding to the community, farmers and industry, lost opportunity costs for organisations such as Gindalbie and Oakagee, environmental offset land purchases and remediation costs and additional compensation for impacts to mineral reserves must be considered. This would also be accompanied by a risk that environmental approvals may not be received.
- Other stakeholders advised that they would prefer an option located further east to provide closer connections to an existing generator (Verve Energy) and potential mining load (Gindalbie), quite the opposite to feedback from the landowners. This is an example of how Western Power has had to carefully balance the competing interests of various groups. As such, the preferred option 10 could be considered to be the 'middle ground' between these two views.
- The Valuer General's Office provided advice during the corridor selection process to the effect that all corridor options had potentially similar compensation costs, with specific assessments only possible once the line route had been selected. Based on this advice, compensation costs are included in SKM's Final Report.