



**Hon Geoff Wilson MP**  
Member for Ferny Grove




**Queensland  
Government**

Your Ref: Petitions  
Our Ref: ME/08/3115, MC2167

18 DEC 2008

Mr Neil Laurie  
The Clerk of the Parliament  
Parliament House  
Cnr Alice and George Streets  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

<b>LAI D UPON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE</b>	
	No.: <u>5208TU946</u>
	Minister for Mines and Energy
	22 DEC 2008
	MP: <u>Hon. G. Wilson MP</u>
Clerk's Signature: _____	

*[Handwritten signature and date: 22/12/08]*

Dear Mr Laurie

I am in receipt of Petition numbers 1119-08 and 1121-08 received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 10 September 2008. I have considered the Petitions carefully and in accord with the requirement of Standing Orders of the Queensland Legislative Assembly, I am pleased to provide my response to these Petitions.

Powerlink, in joint planning with ENERGEX, has identified the need to reinforce the bulk electricity supply network near Cooroy. This upgrade of the electricity supply is necessary to meet the ongoing high growth in electricity demand in the Sunshine Coast, Gympie and surrounding areas. To meet demand, Powerlink plans to construct a new transmission line from its existing substation at Woolooga, approximately 14 kilometres north west of Gympie to a proposed new substation at Eerwah Vale (named Cooroy South).

I acknowledge the genuine community concerns about the possible health effects associated with powerlines.

I note there have been many studies on the subject of electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) and health, however the recognised health authorities have concluded that there is not as yet any conclusive evidence of a causal association between EMFs and cancer. The health authorities rely on the totality of a large number of studies and not on a single study.

The recognised authority in Australia on these matters is the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA). ARPANSA's role is to protect the health and safety of people and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation, and includes management and review of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Interim Guidelines on limits of exposure to 50/60 Hertz electric and magnetic fields (Radiation Health Series No. 30) published in 1989.

The NHRMC Interim Guidelines were based on recommendations of the International Non-Ionizing Radiation Committee of the International Radiation Protection Association, and remain the only guidelines on exposure to power frequency electric and magnetic fields published in Australia to this time.

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I understand that ARPANSA is currently reviewing the NHMRC guidelines about EMFs. The ARPANSA review, when finalised, will replace the NHMRC publication. ARPANSA is expected to deliver its final report in early 2009.

I would note that ARPANSA is an independent Federal Government organisation, and as such, the State Government cannot direct it to undertake any action.

Powerlink is currently undertaking a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for this new transmission line project, to ensure environmental, social or economic impacts associated with the project are identified and managed. As part of the EIA process, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be produced to address any potential environmental, social and economic impacts, including any impacts from EMFs.

Powerlink and its consultants commenced environmental investigations and consultation with landowners in mid 2007. This consultation, including individual discussions with property owners, will continue throughout the EIA process. As a result of ongoing consultation with landowners and stakeholders, as well as EIS investigations, the study alignment for the new transmission line easement and substation location will continue to be refined to reduce environmental impacts, including visual impacts, and where possible, increase the distance of the line from existing houses.

The public can be assured that no decision will be made on the final alignment for the new line until all landowner and stakeholder consultation has been completed. This process includes members of the community being invited to make submissions to the draft EIS. The draft EIS is expected to be released for public comment later this year.

Apart from finalisation of the EIS, there are other processes to be completed before final determinations regarding this project are made. Powerlink has indicated that it intends to request Ministerial designation under the *Integrated Planning Act 1997* of the corridor of land required for this project as land for community infrastructure. In order to proceed with such a request, Powerlink will be required to formally advise landowners and other stakeholders of its intention and provide a further opportunity for landowners to make submissions regarding the project. This would occur after the final EIS is released.

While I acknowledge the matters raised in the Petitions, as Powerlink is still undertaking the processes necessary for implementation of the project, it is important that the views and concerns of affected landholders, the community and other stakeholders be addressed through those processes. For this reason, I encourage all interested parties to raise any concerns about the project through the consultation processes being undertaken for the project, including in response to the draft EIS once it is released.

Yours sincerely



**GEOFF WILSON MP**  
**Minister for Mines and Energy**