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Ecological Solutions for People & the Environment

Independent Specialist Review of Ecological Specialist Report for Basic Assessment:

Proposed Expansion of the Existing Komsberg Main Transmission Substation

25 November 2015

Savannah Environmental
P.O. Box 148
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Tel. 011 656 3237
Att: Tebogo Mapinga

RE: Independent Review of the Specialist Ecological Report for the Proposed Expansion of the Existing Komsberg Main Transmission Substation.

Savannah Environmental has requested an independent review of the specialist ecological study for the proposed expansion of the Komsberg substation located 60km south of Sutherland. The specialist report was reviewed by myself and the findings of the review are detailed below.

- An area of 20 ha was identified for the study and two alternatives were considered within this area, which would have a total estimated footprint of less than 10ha. The site visit to the affected area took place in late August which is a good time for a site visit as the majority of annuals, forbs and geophytes are out at this time of year, so the timing of the site visit is not likely to pose much of a limitation on the study. In addition, the extent of the site is not very large and so it is not likely that there are any significant features present that were not observed.
- The plant list for the area is derived from only 3220DC and 128 species are reported as present. However, it is clear that the area contains a much higher species richness than this and the low total reflects the poor historical sampling of the area rather than an indication of the number of plant species present in the area. Therefore, in areas where sampling intensity is poor, the area from which the list is derived should be expanded to include additional quarter degree squares.

Conclusions & Recommendations:

Although there are some minor errors and omissions in the report, these are largely of little relevance to the ultimate impact of the development, which is of limited extent and within an area that has experienced some disturbance. The different impacts identified and assessed are those most likely to be associated with the development. All of the impacts assessed are assessed as being of low significance, which is deemed appropriate given the low extent of the site and the lack of highly sensitive features within the development footprint. The recommended mitigation measures are appropriate and no additional mitigation measures are recommended.

Overall, the study is deemed adequate and meets the requirements for a basic assessment and apart from the minor edits suggested, no substantive changes to the assessed impacts or associated mitigation measures are recommended.

Prepared by Simon Todd Pr.Sci.Nat
SACNASP 400425/11.

30 November 2015.