

## **Submission to the Joint Select Committee on Energy Matters in Tasmania**

To the honourable members of the committee,

I am writing this letter of submission as a former Hydro Tasmania construction employee, where I started my working life.

I have always taken a keen interest in all things regarding energy generation in Tasmania. I am extremely proud to have been a part of the 100-year Tasmanian Hydro construction dynasty, which has brought not only economic prosperity to the state, but also a rich social & cultural diversity through employee migration programs.

My wife Helen & I are very enthusiastic about the future of Tasmania, as we have what the rest of the world wants – the gold standard in energy generation which is 100% base load renewable, with the capacity to increase sustainable energy production into the future.

We feel we are at a crossroads at this point, a once in a lifetime opportunity to revitalize the state both economically & sustainably, while providing worthwhile full-time employment for our children.

Alternatively, we could stay on the path we are currently on where we are dependent on GST revenue from other states & Federal government handouts, & we see a continual mass exodus of our young people to more vibrant places.

We have become particularly interested over the past couple of years in the proposed Marinus project, especially given the impact it will have on our fifth-generation family farm, with part of the transmission corridor travelling across our property.

We would be more than happy to see projects such as Marinus go ahead if we were convinced that it was to the benefit of all Tasmanians, & especially in the best interests of the next generation.

However, through the Tas Networks so-called consultation process, farmers like us have not had the opportunity to deal with the State Government, but instead with a government-appointed third party (\$14 billion global commercial real estate company Jones Lang LaSalle). They cannot, or will not, answer vital questions regarding the economic & sustainable viability of the project. This has left us wary & genuinely concerned about a lack of transparency. It has made us question the whole project, & query crucial issues such as:

- Who pays the ongoing costs? Will it be like Bass Link where Tasmanians pay around \$130 million a year rent to an offshore company?
- Who benefits? What are the specific benefits for Tasmania? Will the profits from such ventures only flow to foreign-owned wind generation companies & mainland industrialists?
- Will there be long-term, meaningful jobs for our young Tasmanians? Or just short-term construction jobs on hydrogen plants & pumped hydro generators?
- Will Marinus remain relevant & viable in 10 years once construction is completed? The rapid growth of local solar & renewable energy capture & battery storage, both residential & industrial, suggests otherwise. Will Marinus be a white elephant (like the failed Tasmanian gas rollout) that Tasmanians will have to subsidise for decades to come?

- Is there a guarantee that Marinus will not import more ‘dirty energy’ into the state as Bass Link currently does? Or are we willing to jeopardise Tasmania’s invaluable carbon negative status?
- Why are we seeking to obtain so-called ‘reliable’ energy when we could be fully utilizing our existing infrastructure (which we have already paid for) to provide Tasmania with self-sufficient reliable energy?
- Will it shut down our existing big industrials if their subsidised electricity can instead be sold at a profit into the mainland energy market?
- Why should Tasmanians be lumbered with not only the ever-increasing \$600 million cost of Marinus, but also the massive \$1 billion cost of the proposed Tas Networks Northwest Transmission Development, when the major beneficiaries of the projects are foreign-owned wind generators who carry none of these financial burdens, & in addition enjoy hefty government subsidies for every wind turbine they place in Tasmania?
- Is it acceptable for Tasmania to become inextricably linked to the National Energy Market, letting the Australian Energy Market Operator dictate not only the price of our power but also our energy accessibility? Will Tasmanians be left in the dark & the cold when mainland Australia experiences power shortfalls & our state capacity is siphoned off to prop up mainland industry & essential services (as was threatened by the AEMO in June 2022)?

Our alternative pathway for Tasmania would be for us to become masters of our own destiny, by fully owning & utilising our green energy, & thereby becoming a world leader as a fully industrialised green economy.

Tasmania is in an ideal position to put out the welcome mat to global companies who are seeking to legitimise & market the “green ethos” of their product, which is becoming a demand from consumers worldwide. For example, tech companies, the motor vehicle industry, manufacturers of wind turbine components (how ironic is it that the components for wind turbines are mostly manufactured in China using coal thermal energy!), packaging companies, cosmetic houses, textile producers such as Nike, & even entertainment businesses such as Disney. These types of industries would also create long-term, fulfilling employment for Tasmanians.

In summary, we ask the committee to please consider the following:

- The impact of this new network coming through our properties would be softened if we thought it was good for Tasmania & our kids.
- We don’t hear from the Govt that the Marinus project will seriously threaten Tasmania’s carbon negative status, through importing ‘dirty’ energy from the national grid (still 60-70% coal); despite the Govt stating that they want to achieve 200% renewable energy by 2030, we will not even be considered an option for new, modern, labour-intensive industries when we will still be importing vast amounts of ‘dirty’ energy back into Tasmania via Marinus Link.
- Tasmania’s existing carbon negative status could be used as a huge incentive to bring global industries to our state, & consequently secure meaningful jobs for Tasmanians & stopping the “brain drain” of our young people.
- Our last Hydro Tas CEO made the statement that Marinus is based largely around wind power – currently the wind power in Tasmania is majority owned by Chinese interests, which suggests that as landowners we would be sacrificing a part of our property to

provide a way for these multinational companies to sell power into the national grid & reap huge profits which will go straight off-shore.

- While a hydrogen plant may provide many jobs during its construction phase, with modern day innovation it is highly likely that the ongoing operation of such a plant will provide very few jobs.
- Hydrogen power generation is not very efficient – why would we waste 30% of our clean energy to create hydrogen power for export when we could keep & utilise 100% of our clean energy in Tasmania.
- Every unit of clean energy we can keep in this state means more employment for young Tasmanians.
- The NEM is cut-throat, the power generators are mainly owned by international corporates whose sole purpose is profit, which we don't think will result in positive outcomes for Tasmanian consumers in the form of reduced power prices (Bass Link is a prime example)
- The distribution of electricity through undersea cables is notoriously inefficient, through energy loss (at least 10% spent on heating mud at the bottom of Bass Strait)
- Marinus is NOT required for Tasmania to have energy security – the existing wind generation is a perfect match with our hydro dams, meaning we could actually utilise our dams to their design capacity (recently we have only used 40-50%) – taken to 90% storage levels would give Tasmania an extra 7000GW of power, which is our state's consumption for 6 months – it would be madness if, as farmers, we went into our summer season with our dams at only 45% capacity, however this is how Hydro Tas is operating our storage dams!
- In a nutshell, we think Tasmania could do more for the environment & more for our young people by keeping our clean energy here in the state.

In the absence of government transparency regarding the Marinus project, we risk tarnishing our state's enviable marketing edge, as Tasmania is already at a point in time where most other jurisdictions aspire to be in 30 years' time. Given our position regarding green energy, this is an extremely exciting time for our state & surely we need to grab it with both hands, as the possibilities are endless. We believe we need to be patient & forward-thinking, as the world will come to us. Perhaps some will think this idealistic, but we believe this is truly attainable & realistic.

These are of course purely our own thoughts, concerns & opinions. However, we would strongly urge you & our fellow Tasmanians to think carefully about the Marinus project, & whether it would truly benefit them, their children, & future generations.

Yours sincerely,

Wade & Helen Rockliff

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