

AEIC Review of Community Engagement Practices.

25 September 2023

Dear Mr Dyer,

1. Thankyou for looking into the consultation methods used by the RE proponents and EnergyCo. This is far overdue.
2. We personally are under the easement acquisition process with EnergyCo, and will be ~3.5km from proposed 250m wind turbines. As we are within the CWOREZ, our whole area is slated for a significant land-use change from productive agriculture that feeds and clothes people, to poisoned industrial wasteland that will never produce power to a satisfactory standard.
3. Understandably, we are not happy about this and will fight it tooth and claw. I could list the unsatisfactory 'consultations' we have had over the past few years, and detail why they were unsatisfactory, but you will no doubt hear something similar from the many other affected citizen landowners.
4. Rather, we should focus on the total lack of consultation by the NSW Parliament prior to their ramming-through of the 'Electricity Infrastructure Investment Bill 2020', which established the REZs. This Bill was first presented to the Legislative Assembly on 10 November, and passed out of the Legislative Council on 27 November 2020.
5. Seventeen days is incredibly short for consideration and debate, let alone seeking public input, given the extreme consequences. And this in a year where Parliament could never sit to debate contentious covid measures, but made time to sneak through this piece of legislation. Hardly in the spirit of informed consent and democratic governance - rather it indicates cynical opportunistic intent.
6. This method is consistent with our experience locally. There is no truly informative or open consultaion before a decision is delivered as a fait accompli. No wind or solar land hosts should be signed up and gagged with option contracts before there has been wide and informative discussion in the community affected.
7. If landowners were not tied to options contracts, once better informed, most if not all would reconsider, we believe. This would then negate any need for new powerlines on new routes, and no consultation with EnergyCo would be required.
8. Consultation is not valid if 'no' is not an acceptable answer, and the powerline Co. keeps doing what they want. The power imbalance that favours EnergyCo is buttressed by the Compulsory Acquisition laws. These powers are also given to private foreign-owned profit driven corporations like Transgrid et al. Why does Government give more power to those already in a dominant negotiating position, rather than supporting the citizens that give them legitimacy?
9. The energy industry in NSW was corporatised and privatised progressively over the past decades - why then does Gov. still have Compulsory Acquisition laws? Should not a landowner be able to negotiate the best deal for their 'shareholders', or no deal at all? So much for free market mechanisms delivering the best allocation of resources.

10. There is no goodwill left in rural communities for these unwanted projects when normal services and infrastructure is non-existent or dilapidated. Then we are asked to shoulder the burden of being a '21st Century Power Station' in EnergyCo's verbiage, for the 'Greater Good' of course. The greater good of corporate profit underwritten by us and our children, so that coastal city dwellers can sleep easy knowing they have bought green energy (sic). Meanwhile our local environment is destroyed, and the pollution of mining and manufacturing, and the energy cost, of wind solar and batteries, is hidden away overseas. Out of sight and out of mind of the TEAL electorates.

11. To conclude, the consultation is a sham if 'no, go away' is not an acceptable response. Coercion and throwing relative pennies at local community groups does not buy social licence. The Legislation itself should be recinded due to the way it was enacted to avoid scrutiny.

Yours sincerely,

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