

Good evening,

It's with a great deal of distress that we write this email to highlight the incompetent, unethical & down right un-professional nature Ausnet services has conducted themselves with regards to the above mentioned western renewables link project thus far & to re-inforce again why this project needs to be scrapped and a new more thorough analysis be completed to find a better way to transmit victorias energy over the next 100 years not the next 10!

We are fifth generation, soon to be 6th generation farmers in Springbank Victoria, one of victoria' premier food bowls and an area that provides local produce like beef, lamb and potatoes not only for victoria but the world. The Western renewables link projects existence jeopardises our ability to farm, to generate a livelihood for multiple families dependant upon our farm for putting food on the table, will lead to an unviability of our farming operation, will dramatically reduce our ability to borrow money against land to invest in the expansion of our business due to a decimation of our properties valuations, will lead to extreme fire risks for both our neighbours & ourselves leaving us un-able to sleep, holiday or even leave our farms in the summer months, will leave us 'un-insurable', further exposing us to financial ruin, plans to destroy our native habitat and the natural protection required for our livestock whilst birthing & rearing their young, ruins our ability to market our product as radiation free produce & removes the habitat for the many native endangered species that reside on our property that are only found in and around the wombat state forest just to name a few.

The consultation thus far has been disastrous to say the least. Initially its clear no community engagement was considered way back when someone sitting in a high rise office thought the western renewables link project had merit and should be considered as the preferred option. Now, 2.5 years on since it was announced

the lack of genuine community engagement has continued and proven that the voices of people who live in the affected areas are not worth our breath and ausnet this past couple of years have merely been trying to tick a box so they can win a contract to own infrastructure they can make millions in profit from every year. At whose expense.... my family and many other families' legacy and future!

A prime example of this is when Ausnet updated the preferred route back in August 2022 and we as affected land holders found out from a NEIGHBOUR, yes thats right a NEIGHBOUR that we were now in line to have a 3 towers cutting through the heart of our property and leaving at least 50% of our holding un-farmable. How is it that we as land holders discover a proposed realignment of the most poorly designed 'western renewables link' project from an email from our neighbour and not have any communication from any representative of Ausnet services, nor the project team in any capacity?? If this isn't a prime example of how poorly this supposed community consultation process has been run I don't know what is. You need to give us the time we deserve and you need to listen to us when we say this project has no business cutting through the heart of victoria's food bowl. This project needs to be scrapped and other alternatives considered!

I would like to reiterate too that the movement of the North Ballarat terminal station was not moved because communities objected and that this was not a win for regional Victoria. All this did was shift the problem onto somewhere else and force the upgrading of the entire WRL project to 500kV and 80m high towers to further limit the production capabilities of affected farms. These decisions did nothing but increase the impacts on the region and money making potential of ausnets infrastructure. The whole line needs to be scrapped!

Another note worth mentioning is that the RIT-T was not applied in a way that is

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credible, which reduces the scope for misunderstandings and disputes. The documents must have a focus on providing transparent, user-friendly data to stakeholders which has not been the case the entire length of your so called consultation period!

The Multi-criteria Analysis is flawed also and needs to be reconsidered because it did not seek to understand what we value at a community level, from a farming level and what is important to us as the landholders who you feel have to carry this burden of old outdated transmission technology for the rest of our days. It was a desktop study by people who have never spoken with the people impacted and this should never have been allowed to occur. If the multi-criteria analysis is so important then it must be applied to the WRL to determine the least-impact solution and further investigate undergrounding as a first priority.

The geographical area of the current proposed WRL alignment is peri-urban and traverses areas that are environmentally sensitive, have established land uses, includes a growing amount of high value landholdings, has materially populated towns, is a high value tourism region and has topography that is not suited to transmission development. This results in a high degree of impacts and constraints that cannot be avoided or mitigated.

The current proposed shared alignment of both VNI West and the WRL creates a supercritical single point of failure and limits geographic diversity. A loss of this line would result in the majority of generation in Western Victoria and imports from NSW to be drastically reduced which would severely impact system security.

You haven't listened thus far, but i ask, no implore you to start listening to us now!!! Your failure to explore feasible alternatives is going to result in increased and continued opposition and potentially lead to preventable problems

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You haven't listened thus far, but i ask, no implore you to start listening to us now!!! Your failure to explore feasible alternatives is going to result in increased and continued opposition and potentially lead to preventable problems surrounding financial distress, depression, and a loss of some of victoria's most productive farmland. .

I believe the Victorian Government and AEMO should consider undergrounding the proposed project (using HVDC) alongside existing transport corridors or on public land to ensure minimal disruption to farm businesses in the region.

You need to do your job, you need to be better and it's not too late to realise a mistake was made but there's still time for you to fix it!

Kind regards,

