

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P140

Name: Grant Hollingworth

Location: Darley, VIC, Australia

Submission

Thank you for inviting feedback on the VNI West Consultation Report that includes the Western Renewables Link (WRL). I am happy for you to publish this.

I live in Darley Victoria which is located within the 500kV section of the WRL, east of Ballarat and west of Melton. I have lived in this area for close to a decade and have always appreciated the unique beauty of this regional town. It is one of the reasons I moved here. My home overlooks the Lerderderg State Park which has amazing scenic value and is recognised as a significant landscape. If you lived here or had visited the region, you would understand why.

I am absolutely appalled that AEMO has planned a large-scale transmission project to dissect this region and adversely impact the significance of this area forever. This, along with the irreversible impact on 1,000's of residents in Darley and surrounding areas quite frankly, has no reasonable justification.

I realise AEMO prefers that AusNet take responsibility for the route selection but it is evident that AEMO has pre-determined the route without consideration of social, environmental, land-use, economic, and cultural impacts. It is clear from the VNI West Consultation Report that AEMO and the Victorian Government understand the importance of a multi-criteria analysis (MCA) when determining an area of interest for development.

What is disturbing is that AEMO clearly believes the people living near the proposed 500kV section of the WRL are of zero significance.

The NEVA Order makes it clear AEMO is required to carry out the functions conferred on it by this Order. These functions include assessing:

- alternate options to the preferred options described in the VNI West PADR and the WRL PACR to facilitate and expedite the development, delivery, construction and energisation of the specified augmentations
- alternate routes, nodes, terminal stations and transmission network design,

- other augmentations of the declared transmission system, and
- changes to the WRL

Why has AEMO not elected to apply the MCA to the entirety of the combined VNI West and WRL projects given the functions conferred above?

Recognising this is not two separate projects but is essentially a revised version of SnowyLink (pink lines) that was first conceived prior to the 2018 Integrated System Plan (ISP).

I appreciate the economic and modelling convenience of splitting SnowyLink into a staged development via two projects such as VNI West and the WRL as strangely it allows benefits to be claimed from one section of the project by building the other section first.

It appears however, that SnowyLink was first proposed to unlock the full capacity of Snowy 2.0, enabling Victoria to be connected to Snowy 2.0 and generate sufficient electricity in time for the closure of the Yallourn coal-fired thermal powered station between 2029 and 2032.

When reading the VNI West Consultation Report, it appears this benefit no longer exists.

- Why then is the Victorian Government announcing VNI West will unlock Snowy 2.0 capacity?
- What is the actual benefit of this project to Victoria now that Snowy 2.0 will not be unlocked?

I realise the Consultation report says there is a net benefit from the combined VNI West and WRL, but it appears to be achieved by not building renewable generators in Victoria.

Isn't this what Victoria actually needs and what the Victorian Government is calling for?

It seems confusing that Victoria's renewable industry is expected to remain idle because of a transmission line that will be built in around 7-8 years. I am not a network engineer but my understanding was that transmission does not generate or store electricity.

If we aren't building anything in Victoria, where is it all coming from?

If renewable electricity is coming from interstate, wouldn't it be cheaper to build generators and storage in Victoria rather than paying billions to transport it from hundreds of kilometres away?

Just like Marinus, it does not make economic sense.

I tried to read the Consultation Report along with all the spreadsheets and the report by Ernst & Young but to be honest, from what I was able to digest:

- I did not find the information credible (as indicated in my questions above).

- There was much that could be easily misunderstood.
- I did not find the information transparent as I had to search multiple documents that then referenced multiple documents, and so on.
- I certainly did not find the information was presented in a way that was user-friendly and reduced the scope for disputes.
- There appears to be contradictions in the outcomes when compared to what the Victorian Government believes this combined project will achieve.

I believe that meeting the above criteria for public consultation is a requirement under the RIT-T application Guidelines.

Does AEMO believe it has met this obligation?

Unfortunately I had many questions but other than webinars that I could not attend due to work, there was no public consultation by AEMO in this region.

Can you explain what your reasoning is for that?

I don't understand why AEMO does not feel that engagement with those heavily impacted is important. This is not AusNet's responsibility, as the NEVA Order clearly indicates (it does not mention AusNet at all)

How can AEMO carry out the functions conferred on it by this Order if it does not make the effort to engage?

There is much I would like to say about the impacts on me, my friends, family, and community but if AEMO does know what these impacts are by now, it is likely it never will.

While I am in full support of our transition to renewables, on the basis of my observations above, I do not see any meaningful benefit in this combined project (AKA SnowyLink) and I cannot endorse it. I do not believe the Victorian Government should be either.

Sincerely

Grant Hollingworth

ADDENDUM TO SUBMISSION

This submission relates to community engagement.

The consultation report states:

AVP and Transgrid recognise the vital role that community and landholders have in the planning and delivery of major transmission infrastructure projects. AVP and Transgrid acknowledge that, while the community is generally supportive of renewables and a transition away from coal at lowest cost for all consumers, stakeholders who live closer to where transmission lines and associated infrastructure may be constructed are likely to have different perspectives or concerns about the potential impacts, and may not feel that the benefits outweigh the impacts.

Best practice says that early engagement based on the values of trust, integrity, empathy and transparency is fundamental to building understanding and the foundation for support. This includes ensuring that stakeholders', communities' and landholders' points of views are sought, acknowledged and appropriately considered and responded to in a respectful, fair and equitable way as early as possible. This will enable people living and working nearby to have the opportunity to participate in shaping an outcome that is socially acceptable for regional communities while meeting consumer needs.

Engagement Plans for this VNI West project.

In particular, the following themes have been identified as critical to building awareness and support, and are a key priority for this project:

- * A commitment to early engagement, listening to and communicating with stakeholders with honesty and integrity to understand their views and concerns, and ensuring the project team is equipped to have these conversations.
- * Co-designing and clearly communicating the engagement process and opportunities to stakeholders including landholders and communities – including how and when to provide feedback, and how their feedback will be used.
- * Ensuring all interested stakeholders and communities can easily access project information through a variety of channels including websites and other platforms, and that any information can be easily understood.
- * Providing ample notice of consultation or engagement opportunities, and ensuring educational materials are available to help increase energy literacy, to facilitate meaningful participation.
- * Dispelling myths in a timely manner to help alleviate undue anxiety.

My observations are that none of this has occurred.

The single biggest factor that will slow down the energy transition is planners and developers that don't take social licence seriously.

Social licence for the planner or developer comes down to how and when they choose to involve the community in decisions that impact them. If they can demonstrate they have integrity, and credibility, are transparent in their

actions and decisions and actively encourage participation before any decisions are made, then that will go a long way to developing trust.

AEMO (Nicola Falcon) said in the media yesterday (18 April 2023) it has been openly and transparently consulting on this project since 2019. Why then have these communities only learned of its proposed development 8 weeks ago? And why is there so much opposition to VNI West now.

It is my recommendation AEMO starts taking social licence seriously if it ever expects transmission to be built in Victoria and offers a public apology to communities for the poor engagement so far.

Warm regards

Grant Hollingworth

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P142

Name: Gayl Morrow

Location: Mollonghip, VIC, Australia

Submission

I write to register my objections to the proposed Ausnet Western Transmission Towers.

As a resident of Mollonghip my objections are based on the grounds that the massive transmission towers and sub station will have serious negative effects on the communities they are placed in without giving any benefit to these communities.

Agriculture, tourism, visual amenity, environmental safety will all be negatively affected by bringing these transmission towers through the proposed areas.

My greatest concern is that planning for this project has been done without appropriate consideration about how much needed renewable power is to be provided. In the long term it is not feasible to carve up landscapes and communities with such massive infrastructure.

Instead bringing smaller scale transmission to local communities is more appropriate.

State and Federal Governments must subsidise the building of transmission of renewable energy.

I believe that a preferable option for this project is to link it into existing lines and underground.

Yours sincerely,

Gayl Morrow

Mollonghip Vic 3352

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P143

Name: Garry Baker

Location: Marnoo, VIC, Australia

Submission

To Whom it May Concern.

We strongly object to any of these lines on or near our property. We have a pig breeding indoor complex and need every bit of land we have to operate. Our address is (WITHHELD) Marnoo West.

Regards Garry and Jo Baker

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P144

Name: Joe Finneran

Location: Mollonghip, VIC, Australia

Submission

Dear sir/madam

I am extremely concerned by the proposed overhead powerlines in Victoria's critical food bowl area which make no logical financial, social or environmental sense when you review the facts in detail.

I am curious to understand how AEMO have factored into your financial impact/analysis the costs of overhead powerlines versus underground over the 50 year asset life cycle. From my long term asset calculations the additional costs to melbournians consumers per annum to put the powerlines underground is less than a 6 pack of beer or 4 x takeaways coffees per annum. So the narrative of its too expensive appears misleading and ill informed. Especially when compared to the significant decrease in food production, farmer productivity losses, bushfire risks which are enormous over the 50+year asset life of the powerlines.

So I would be keen to see AEMO's or the Victorian government's calculations to demonstrate value for money, social benefits, environmental positives to Victorians who ultimately pay the bill. Whilst considering long term risks of overhead powerlines for current and future Victorians. How do local Victorian stakeholders benefit when the proposed operator is a global multinational that is fundamentally driven by shareholder profits?

Furthermore, i understand from media releases that the black saturday fires cost victoria/tax payers \$8bn in lost revenue and long lasting devastating impacts due to the loss of life and homes caused by the failure of the network operators actions as highlighted by the royal commission. I recollect from memory that the operator settled damages out of court without acknowledgement of responsibility. Therefore what mechanisms does AEMO have in place to protect regional communities from potential mismanagementof infrastructure over the next 50 years. As I understand that AEMO has contracted the same operator to build the proposed powerlines? What confidence can AEMO provide to Victorians that we won't have to suffer significant hardship due to potential operational challenges in the future?

Surely, the smart obvious answer is to put the powerlines underground like the 200+ global projects around the world that are putting high voltage networks underground to avoid potential social, economic and environmental disasters. Yes, the initial capital outlay is higher but the long term operating costs, risk mitigation of putting the

powerlines underground significantly out weigh this higher initial capex. Again this is a 50 year project/Asset life with the capital depreciating over 50 years. So the underground option is negligible in terms of costs to consumers per annum. You would expect that the operators parent company in there acquisition of Ausnet have factored in returns based on different scenarios in their acquisition due diligence process. .I.e. underground capex/opex, return on investment, NPV's etc.

I am sure other contributors will highlight the devastating impact to jobs, livelihoods, agriculture, property values and tourism that the suggested overhead powerlines will have. Not sure if you realise that the area/route you are proposing has 66% of the most fertile/food growing soil in Victoria! It would be great to understand how you intend to replace this vital asset to feed future Australians as it unclear how farmers can effectively grow food or compete globally with the proposed overhead powerlines which will make farming financially unviable.

I look forward to your considered/informed response.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email.

Kind regards

Joe Finneran

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P145

Name: Tracey & Sharon Olive

Location: Yeungroon, VIC, Australia

Submission

On behalf of my sister and myself I wish to provide the following submission, objecting to the use of Option 5 for the VNI West project.

We own a property in Yeungroon which we fear will be negatively impacted if Option 5 becomes the route for the proposed power lines. We have recently invested significant funds to build a house on a site that was selected for the amazing vista and its remoteness. Ironically, it is also completely off-grid. This is a home that we had intentions of spending a lot of our retirement in.

The thought of our landscape being ruined by a line of ugly power line towers is quite distressing, particularly as this was not on any form of development plans when we built the property.

We feel that Option 5 has been put forward as a preferred option due to the backlash received from other communities. We are a smaller community and therefore have less “vocal power” than others. This is not the cheapest or the most direct route that is available. Our community has been deemed as being the preferred collateral damage.

We also have concerns around the impact it will have on our farming community. My family have farmed this area for many generations and the

value of the land as an agricultural asset cannot be discounted. The area is well known for providing high yielding grain / legume crops and grazing land for sheep and cattle. Whilst we acknowledge that some of the concerns around farming have been addressed, it would still mean some loss of agricultural land and will impact on the way in which farming is carried out in paddocks that are affected. The compensation that is being proposed is not commensurate with the value of the properties and the potential loss in income.

In summary our objections are along the following lines:

- * The size and appearance of the power line towers are not in keeping with the surrounds and would significantly impact the aesthetics of the area. This has the potential to significantly de-value a property that we have recently invested significant savings in. It has the potential to negatively impact the landscape and outlook we currently have, impacting on our health and lifestyle. We are only one of many who

would be impacted in the same way.

- * Increased fire risk in remote areas.

- * Potential harm to prime farming areas and de-valuation of land

- * Option 5 does not appear to be the most cost effective or direct route available

- * The discussed preference for a tower not being located within 300m of a dwelling does not satisfy any concerns as this is still a reasonably close distance which will severely impact any landscape. One of the major reasons we live in a country area is to escape that type of development.

Thank you for enabling us to provide a submission. We truly hope that there is genuine consultation throughout this process for any community that may be impacted.

Kind regards

Tracey and Sharon Olive

Yeungroon 3525

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P146

Name: Ken & Susan Jackson

Location: Stawell, VIC, Australia

Submission

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the proposed plan to install powerlines through farming properties, national parks, and the lack of consultation with the community. As a member of this community, I strongly urge you to reconsider this plan and to involve the community in the decision-making process.

The lack of consultation with the community regarding this plan is deeply concerning and feel an extension on this consultation process should be considered. The community deserves to be informed about any proposals that will have a significant impact on their lives and the environment. The installation of powerlines through farming properties and national parks will have far-reaching consequences, and the community has the right to be involved in any decisions made about their land and natural resources.

Furthermore, the installation of powerlines through farming properties and national parks will have a detrimental effect on the land values in the area. Properties adjacent to powerlines are typically valued at a lower price due to the negative impact on the landscape and the potential health risks associated with electromagnetic fields. This will have a significant financial impact on homeowners in the area.

In addition to the negative impact on land values, the installation of powerlines will have serious consequences for farmers and the natural environment. The powerlines will take up valuable land, limit access to crops, and interfere with irrigation systems. This will result in significant financial losses for farmers and may even force them to abandon their farms altogether. Moreover, the powerlines will disrupt the fragile ecosystems of national parks and pose a significant threat to wildlife and their habitats.

I implore you to involve the community in the decision-making process and to explore alternative solutions that are less intrusive and more environmentally friendly. The community deserves to be informed about any proposals that will have a significant impact on their lives and the environment. There are other options available, such as installing the powerlines underground or along existing infrastructure. By doing so, we can avoid the negative impacts on farmers, national parks, land values, and our environment.

In conclusion, I urge you to prioritize the protection of our natural environment, our farmers, and the community's health and wellbeing. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jackson AG Pty LTD

Our family,

Ken and Susan Jackson

Emily Jackson and Chad McSparron

Tom, Rachel, Elsie and Stella Jackson

Hugh and Erin Jackson

Georgie Jackson and Jesse Anderl

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P147

Name: Damon Boag

Location: Richmond Plains, VIC, Australia

Submission

Subject: AEMO Powerlines

I run a 1200 hectare cropping and sheep property in central Victoria and the proposed powerlines pose a threat to my work and livelihood for the reasons stated below.

I have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes farmland that I operate a business on. I am concerned by the potential negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on my farming operations and business.

If the transmission infrastructure was to be built on my farmland, I am concerned that I have no information on what land access arrangements could be demanded by the transmission company before, during and after construction; what costs this would have on my business; and what my rights would be.

I am also concerned that there is no information available to me about the compensation that would be provided because of the impacts on my farming operations including reduced production and decreased land values. It is therefore impossible to provide an assessment on the costs to my business if the project was constructed on my land.

Whilst I have not been provided with information that details the impact of transmission infrastructure on my farmland, I believe the following issues will impact my ability to maintain a commercial farming operation now and into the future:

- * Decreased land value and loss of productive capacity;
- * Inability to use tractors and machinery under powerlines;
- * Inability to irrigate under powerlines;

- * Inability to utilize emerging technologies such as drones and autonomous vehicles;
- * Refusal to give notice or inform landholders what chemicals have been used on site causing issues with vendor declarations;
- * Spread of weeds;
- * Failure to close gates;
- * Damage to crops;
- * Materials left on site causing damage to machinery'

These impacts must be considered when evaluating the true costs and benefits of the proposed project across all agricultural business in the region

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

Prior to the announcement on 20 February 2023 that the corridor for the VNI West project would change, I had no knowledge of the proposed project and no understanding of it potentially impacting my farm business. I believe the community needs more time to respond to this project so a more accurate assessment of its costs and benefits can be made.

Damon Boag, Richmond Plains

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P148

Name: Molly Leahy

Location: Richmond Plains, VIC, Australia

Submission

Subject: AEMO Powerlines

I run a 1200 hectare cropping and sheep property in central Victoria and the proposed powerlines pose a threat to my work and livelihood for the reasons stated below.

I have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

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Molly Leahy, Richmond Plains

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P149

Name: Tim Leahy

Location: Richmond Plains, VIC, Australia

Submission

Subject: AEMO Powerlines

I run a 1200 hectare cropping and sheep property in central Victoria and the proposed powerlines pose a threat to my work and livelihood for the reasons stated below.

I have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes farmland that I operate a business on. I am concerned by the potential negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on my farming operations and business.

If the transmission infrastructure was to be built on my farmland, I am concerned that I have no information on what land access arrangements could be demanded by the transmission company before, during and after construction; what costs this would have on my business; and what my rights would be.

I am also concerned that there is no information available to me about the compensation that would be provided because of the impacts on my farming operations including reduced production and decreased land values. It is therefore impossible to provide an assessment on the costs to my business if the project was constructed on my land.

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- * Inability to irrigate under powerlines;
- * Inability to utilize emerging technologies such as drones and autonomous vehicles;

- * Refusal to give notice or inform landholders what chemicals have been used on site causing issues with vendor declarations;
- * Spread of weeds;
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- * Materials left on site causing damage to machinery'

These impacts must be considered when evaluating the true costs and benefits of the proposed project across all agricultural business in the region

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

Prior to the announcement on 20 February 2023 that the corridor for the VNI West project would change, I had no knowledge of the proposed project and no understanding of it potentially impacting my farm business. I believe the community needs more time to respond to this project so a more accurate assessment of its costs and benefits can be made.

Tim Leahy, Richmond Plains

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P150

Name: George Payne

Location: Richmond Plains, VIC, Australia

Submission

Subject: AEMO Powerlines

I run a 1200 hectare cropping and sheep property in central Victoria and the proposed powerlines pose a threat to my work and livelihood for the reasons stated below.

I have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes farmland that I operate a business on. I am concerned by the potential negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on my farming operations and business.

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George Payne, Richmond Plains

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P151

Name: Torri Tillig

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

Subject: Powerline Submission

VNI west powerline transmission Submission

I have only just become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a power transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The pink blob on the map for this proposed transmission line includes farmland through my district. I am concerned by the detrimental negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on my health and the highly agricultural ran community that I live in.

We have not had any questions answered and little to no consultation. Three people out the front of our local town hall, who can't even answer a question as simple as how tall the towers are, is just not consultation at all. I have a few questions for you:

- What happens to the heritage sites?
- What happens to the cultural background?
- What happens to the towers when they condemn them?
- Where's the concrete in the ground go?

Only to name a few of the basic destructive complications that the powerlines will have on the people who have to work and live with them! Everybody needs to be made aware of the social and environmental impacts that this will bring into the community.

From a CFA point of view, if fires can't be fought near or under the transmission lines, it could burn acres and acres before it is brought under control.... We don't want another Black Saturday do we? This could claim the lives and homes of many vulnerable people and animals again!

I believe as a resident of one of the affected communities, option 5 isn't the answer for renewable energy transmission lines. The Victorian Government and AEMO must put the lines underground along existing transport corridors not on highly productive farmland. If option 5 was to go ahead, communities and families will be ripped apart.

I personally, think it's disgusting the way you are just trying to railroad through the farmers land who primarily feed us. If you thought we weren't going to fight for our area, you thought wrong. Our community is strong and will not back down! Stop wasting everyone's time.

These powerlines are not being erected under any circumstance within the community I live in!

Please think about our future, and the generations to come. These powerlines are not being erected under any circumstances within the community I live in.

Name: Torri Tillig

Location: St Arnaud

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P152

Name: Glenda Watts

Location: Slaty Creek, VIC, Australia

Submission

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm writing to bring to your attention the severely detrimental impact that the Option 5 proposal will have on our community in central Victoria; I just ask for a few short minutes of your time. I'd like you to put my shoes on, and I'll take you for a drive to our back paddock.

At the end of the track we reach a cyclone fence, and from there it's just a short walk to the top of a small hill. In front of us, there's nearly a 360-degree panoramic view. The picture before you has a small mountain range – the Grampians – in the far distance, a corridor of trees hugging the Avoca river, the silos and a few houses of our local town are off to the North, but in closer you can see all the paddocks. Some with crops, others with sheep, others resting ahead of the cropping season, when they'll be sewn and grow crops that will become next year's harvest. If we're lucky, and the season is kind, they'll produce the wheat that will become flour to be made into bread, barley that will be exported overseas and malted for beer, and canola that will become oil on the supermarket shelf.

In the immediate foreground you'll see almost 20,000 tress that I've helped plant on my farm to improve its biodiversity and make our little piece of earth that little bit better for my family having been here. This is my back yard. It's a great back yard; we've cared for this land since the 1850s, and before that the native owners clearly cared for it too. We're proud custodians of this land which has raised 6 generations of farmers, and I warmly invite you to come and visit so you can see it with your own eyes. I'd love to share it with you.

The proposed VNI West Transmission Line Option 5, which I will remind you is not the preferred option, will see the enormous transmission towers cut a scar across the landscape. We don't know exactly where, but whether they in our backyard, our neighbours, or on a relative's farm a few kilometres up the road, it really doesn't matter; it's still in our backyard. This is the back yard we have loved, cherished, and nurtured for 6 generations. The overwhelming sense of dread breaks my heart. Our son has recently chosen to leave his managerial role in the local bank to return to the family farm as its 6th generation custodian, to live and share his dream with his wife and two young boys.

The disruption and difficulty of farming amongst these transmission lines and their burdensome easements will take a terrible toll on the future viability of farming in our community. Land values will decrease, debt to equity ratios will rise, viability and profitability will be driven down. This clearly has a negative flow on effect to our small communities; failing farms cause young families to sell up and move on, pupil numbers will decline, shops and businesses will close, the few remaining health services will then too become unviable, and their doors will close. What started as an ill-informed proposal that neglected to properly consider existing easements for transmission lines in the La Trobe valley, has the real potential to deliver a whole swath of ghost-towns across central and western Victoria. Ghost towns caused by the failure of AEMO and its partners to adequately and sufficiently investigate far better, more economical and efficient options than Option 5. With her droughts, floods and mouse plagues Mother Nature challenges the viability of farming in our region quite enough already; she really doesn't need any assistance from AEMO or the Government.

I am proud of my back yard, and I know that if the indigenous people who once lived here could see it, they would see that we've cared for it well. They would see some scar trees that we've protected, they'd see familiar native flora and fauna, they'd see a landscape that's well cared for, and getting better as the years go by. To destroy this landscape and the farms that have created it with an unnecessary & ill-informed project, would wreak such a heavily toll on the mental well-being of this entire community. I'm not sure how you could sufficiently measure or consider such an impact as part of project assessment or evaluations, but I know that you should try. You must.

I warmly invite you to contact me so I can proudly share my back yard with you, and by doing so, you may have a better and more complete understanding of why my family and our community simply can't and won't accept Option 5.

Kind Regards,

Glenda Watts

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P153

Name: Denis Watts

Location: Slaty Creek, VIC, Australia

Submission

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to raise my concerns with the proposed VNI West Option 5, and request for it to be removed from further consideration for the reasons contained in this submission.

As a sixth generation farmer still farming our family's original land selection made back in 1874, I'm yet to be convinced of the assessment methodology and criteria weighting that indicates the redirected VNI West transmission lines through the Charlton and St. Arnaud areas (Option 5) to be an equally preferred routing option. Sufficient consideration has clearly not been given to the real and significant concerns of our community. Can you explain why?

Carving up our properties with 500kV double circuit overhead electricity transmission lines with a compulsorily acquired easement, will have an immeasurably detrimental impact on our workplace. The restrictions of access, permit requirements and associated usage limitations will undoubtedly make farming unnecessarily more difficult and even more challenging than it already is. Compensation of \$8,000 / kilometre of impacted farm land is a mere token attempt to buy our silence. My silence cannot be bought. This is my family's farm, my father's family's farm and his father and grandfather and great-grandfather before him. And now, my own son is returning to our farm to take the reins. Farming is difficult enough as it is, without ill-informed projects turning marginal businesses completely unviable. Again, why has this been an ill-informed project for our community and also for the farming community.

The loss of productivity and continuity in farming practices will cause a decrease in production and productivity, leading to depressed land values and poorer debt to equity ratios. The end result will be a devastating and irreparable impact on the enthusiasm of the next generation of farmers, the ones who are already – at great expense – embracing new technologies such as drones and auto-steer tractors, robotics, automation and Internet of Things to deliver the productivity gains needed to remain viable.

This will be increased bio-security risks from uncontrolled access to farm-land, noxious weeds taking hold in easements and burdening farmers with additional weed control and prevention costs, not to mention the risks

that aren't yet fully understood; the impact of high voltage transmission lines on critical factors such as animal fertility and human mental health and well-being. Have these even been considered? It is absolutely critical these issues are given their deserved priority and consideration. Have you given this that deserved priority? I would be pleased to hear your process and your understanding of 'farming' – an understanding of farming in the true sense, is critical to this priority.

It is clear that Option 5 has failed to take into consideration any of the concerns raised herein. Government bodies cannot make decisions on incomplete and flawed assessment and analysis; unless these and the many other concerns of the potentially impacted property owners are sufficiently addressed, Option 5 should be eliminated from any further consideration.

Sincerely,

Denis Watts

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P154

Name: Debbie Bayard

Location: Ballan, VIC, Australia

Submission

As a country Victorian I am against all forms of overhead power transmission lines, regardless of where the government thinks to dump them. Here, there or anywhere. It is an unacceptable and outdated risk to the environment and human life. Fire safety, food production and native habitat should be considered in this day and age. The Western Renewables Link or whatever fancy name you choose to call it, is a disgrace and has been since day 1. There are better alternatives that are being ignored. Why should country Victoria be ruined so people in the city can sit around and think they have 'green' energy. It never was and will never be green. Do these things properly. Put it underground like the rest of the modern world are doing.

Sincerely,

Debbie Bayard

Ballan

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P156

Name: Daniel Toohey

Location: Springbank, VIC, Australia

Submission

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 that's 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 Ausnet's 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 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 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,

Dan Toohey

Springbank, Victoria

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P157

Name: Cate Lancashire

Location: Ballarat, VIC, Australia

Submission

To whom it may concern

I am the mother and grandmother of children/grandchildren who will be the inheritors of your poorly conceived project that will be a blight on the landscape and forever a reminder of the narrow sighted, \$ driven leaders who have “developed” this project.

The consultation process was not long enough, transparent enough, or informative enough to allow any one to adequately respond.

The North Ballarat terminal station was not moved because communities objected - this was not a win for regional Victoria. All this did was shift the problem somewhere else and force the upgrading of the entire WRL project to 500kV and 80m high towers. These decisions did nothing but increase the impacts on the region - huge impacts on agriculture and mental health!

The RIT–T was not applied in a way that is credible, which reduces the scope for misunderstandings and disputes. The documents must have a focus on providing transparent, user-friendly data to stakeholders.

The Multi-criteria Analysis is flawed because it did not seek to understand what we value and what is important to us. It was a desktop study by people who have never spoken with the people impacted, who have never left their offices to visit and understand the regions.

If the multi-criteria analysis is so important then it must be applied to the WRL to determine the least-impact solution.

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. Not to mention the loss of the ability to produce food with low food km’s.

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 are not listening and your failure to explore feasible alternatives is going to result in increased and continued opposition.

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 and to mitigate bushfire risk.

Think this process through, not just for the now but for the future!

I look forward to a genuine, non form generated response to my concerns!

Regards

Cate Lancashire

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P158

Name: Bevan & Marge Olive

Location: Yeungroon, VIC, Australia

Submission

I wish to protest at the government's handling of the proposed powerlines to pass through our area re St Arnaud Boort .

The government handling of this project has been nothing but a disgrace. The lack of consultation is breath taking. There is no regards to the costs and stress involved to the individual land owner, so far the compensation is nothing but a insult.

This is highly productive broad acre farming with huge machinery that will not be able to operate under these conditions. Hoping the government can get its act together and come up something credible

Yours faithfully

Bevan Olive concerned farmer

Yeungroon 3525

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P159

Name: Barry McKenzie

Location: Charlton, VIC, Australia

Submission

Hi, Thanks for being given the opportunity to question/comment on your process and have some input into the outcome.

Some comments on your consultation process first of all.

The speed at which this process has happened is alarming. This seemed to be an issue which was happening elsewhere (near Ballarat) until not very long ago, & then all of a sudden we hear that the preferred option is that it is now to cut a path through our vicinity.

We had a Public meeting at 9am-11am in front of our Shire hall. As with many who had other commitments, largely employment, I could not attend. I did speak to several people who were able to get there and the assessments from those who did was very consistent and negative. The 3 people there representing the VNI West clearly knew very little about the project, could not (or would not?) answer questions, but simply had handouts for people to take. They did write any questions down, which I assume formed part of your FAQs, but it was a waste of people's time to attend. This was not consultation, but merely fact collecting on your behalf, with little to gain for those in the community who came along expecting to be able to learn something about the VNI West.

I listened to the webinar and asked a few questions, but it took so long getting through all the information which was presented that we ran out of time at the end. I had to leave, and although we have been told the session was recorded & we would be advised when it is available, no info has been sent yet, and of course we are running out of time to make an application..... A late correction to this, we have been sent a link to the recording, but the Q&A session at the end is not part of the recording.

One of the things I would like to know is how do you measure anxiety & lack of amenity to include that in the assessment. Although it was stated in the webinar you cannot measure it, that is something that should be taken into account in the measurement of social factors, is it not?

Compared to the cost of the total project & expected income, the amount allocated for payment to farmers is insignificant. I would like to know how anyone came to the conclusion that \$8000 per km is a fair and reasonable

price, and for only 25 years when the issues the line creates continue for as long as it stands. While standing and operating it will be creating considerable income for the power companies or others who operate the transmission lines (but not the farmers through who's property the line traverses). We do not believe we will be directly impacted by easements, but think this is a significant issue for those that are.

Even though this payment is made to farmers who are directly impacted by the pylon placement, it is an insignificant amount of money in the scheme of things. If the VNI west link is about 200kms then the payments will total around \$1.6M pa. In a project apparently totalling \$3.2 billion (as quoted by Nicola from AEMO at the St Arnaud VFF meeting on 21/3/2023) that is well less than a tenth of a percent pa, which seems ludicrous given that the route is essential to the operation of the VNI.

For those of us who do not have commercial farming operations, but are using the property as a lifestyle choice, the impact of the value of the land which may have transmission lines in the vicinity is considerable. Our property is of value in this regard due to the peaceful environment. The views in all directions is a major part of that value. Those views will be impacted significantly by the building of transmission lines across our vista, which in turn will have an impact on the value of the property. How do we put a price on that, depreciation is generally in terms of commercial production, not aesthetics?

As a result of the above issues we would like you to note our objections to the VNI West line passing in our vicinity, and also the process (or lack) of consultation.

We have just read on one of the Q&A sessions about the idea of making the pylons in the shape of some native Australian animals, which sounds like a tremendous alternative instead of having the unsightly structures ruin the views. We believe that many would be more receptive to this and urge you to consider it.

Barry and Deirdre McKenzie

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P160

Name: (WITHHELD)

Location: Gordon, VIC, Australia

Submission

Good day.

Since the WVTNP 's plans were rumoured in early 2019 every day has been a nightmare for us – the home we built to take us into old age and which cost us all our savings, has been declared “unsale-able” by real estate assessments so appears now to be worthless and, with 85metre+ towers less than 150metres from our front door and transmission lines spanning most of our property, will be a nightmare to live in. The stress of the past 3+ years of uncertainty, obfuscation, lies, and appalling behaviour of Ausnet employees has resulted in us suffering both physical and mental illnesses.

We and our neighbours have suffered enough.

In addition to the personal impacts on us and our families, we bring to your attention the following issues:

** the consultation process for this submission process has not been informative enough, transparent enough or long enough to allow adequate responses from our community;

** the RIT-T has not been applied in a way that is credible, which reduces the scope for disputes and misunderstandings: the documents must have a focus on providing transparent, user-friendly data to stakeholders;

** the “Multi-criteria Analysis” is flawed because it did not seek to understand what we value and what is important to we landholders/stakeholders - it was a desktop study by people who have never spoken with the people impacted ! If the “multi-criteria analysis” is so important then it must be applied to the Western Renewables Link to determine the least-impact solution;

** 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 number 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 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;

** We are surrounded by forest and hundreds of species of flora and fauna will be impacted by the construction and maintenance of the ugly and dangerous transmission infrastructure. In the event of bushfire(s) our fire services will be hampered by the towers/wires;

** We know the North Ballarat terminal station was not moved because communities objected and this is not a win for regional Victoria. All this did was shift the problem somewhere else and force the upgrading of the entire WRL project to 500kV and 80+metre high towers. These decisions did nothing but increase the impacts on the region.

It is our contention that the Victorian Government and AEMO should be re-scoping the project to ensure transmission sustainability/longevity by UNDERGROUNDING the proposed project using HVDC alongside existing transport corridors or on public land to ensure minimal disruption to farm businesses, small communities and tourist enjoyment along the route and throughout the region. We believe that AEMO, Ausnet and the Victorian government are not listening to the communities impacted by these appalling project proposals. Your failure to explore feasible alternatives will result in increased and continued opposition to these projects.

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P161

Name: Anthony Hargreaves

Location: Charlton, VIC, Australia

Submission

AEMO

Daniel Andrews

Jade Benham

I Write this letter as a concerned Citizen Land owner in the Buloke and Loddon Shire. As a farmer I am disgusted in the lack of communication in a large project taken on by the Andrews Government and aemo, with no communication to the public, land owners as in farmers business people and communities, that you plan to install electricity towers and lines through our area to connect Victoria to New South Wales, there is no way I will grant permission for this project to go ahead on my properties, I believe there other ways around this project you need to talk and communicate with local Shires landholders Farmers Communities that you have a plan and we need to see it for discussion, no plan no Project. This proposed project will decrease land values, productivity , spread weeds, damage to soil, peoples well being will be affected, life needs to be lived and wont be enjoyable under a power line I ask you people to respect our thoughts and give some communication.

Regards

Anthony Hargreaves

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P162

Name: Peter and Donna Sexton

Location: Terrapee, VIC, Australia

Submission

Submission on the VNI West – Consultation Report

Our family owned and operated cropping and sheep farm is located in Terrapee, roughly halfway between Charlton and Boort (inside the proposed area for the transmission infrastructure). Our commodities include, wheat, barley, canola, lentils, vetch hay and grain, oaten hay and grain and for the livestock, quality lambs, meat and wool. The proposed transmission lines will have several impacts on our property, these include but are not limited to the below.

We use control traffic farming which involves all machinery driving on the same wheel tracks (3m) to drastically limit the compaction of our soils, this practice has been a part of our operations for 15 years. With the transmission lines being built on our land that will involve numerous vehicles and machinery driving on our land throwing 15 years of practice out the window and severely compacting our soils which will have a direct impact on our crop production yields.

We also use spray planes to apply chemical, fungicide and insecticide over our crops which is a practice that will not be able to be used with these lines. This then leads into the question of who will be responsible for the land maintenance under the towers where our spray vehicles cannot access??

Our on-farm technology is always advancing with drones being used to map paddocks for things like weed and soil information, again impossible with powerlines running through. We also currently use autosteer (which allow us to run a control traffic system) which would be caused to drop out due to reception interference from the power lines.

We use controlled burning as a weed management tool which will no longer be possible but also the risk of any fires breaking out would be a huge risk to our community with fire fighting capabilities severely hindered.

The safety of our family and employees is our highest priority here on our farm and the risk of operating large machinery such as headers and boom sprays will be significant in and around the lines and towers.

With all these points in mind we believe our family will be directly impacted by this proposed build with our mental health, safety, and financial position.

We also would like to make note of the great disappointment we have had due to attending community meetings to get more information from AEMO on this build which were not actually attended by any AEMO representation. The consultation with impacted communities has been an absolute joke and no questions have been answered. If you're not willing to front a community meeting there must be a lot to hide....

I have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes farmland that I operate a business on. I am concerned by the potential negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on my farming operations and business.

If the transmission infrastructure was to be built on my farmland, I am concerned that I have no information on what land access arrangements could be demanded by the transmission company before, during and after construction; what costs this would have on my business; and what my rights would be.

I am also concerned that there is no information available to me about the compensation that would be provided because of the impacts on my farming operations including reduced production and decreased land values. It is therefore impossible to provide an assessment on the costs to my business if the project was constructed on my land.

Whilst I have not been provided with information that details the impact of transmission infrastructure on my farmland, I believe the following issues will impact my ability to maintain a commercial farming operation now and into the future:

- decreased land value and loss of productive capacity;
- Inability to use tractors and machinery under powerlines;
- inability to irrigate under powerlines;
- inability to utilize emerging technologies such as drones and autonomous vehicles;
- refusal to give notice or inform landholders what chemicals have been used on site causing issues with vendor declarations;
- spread of weeds;
- failure to close gates;
- damage to crops;
- materials left on site causing damage to machinery.

These impacts must be considered when evaluating the true costs and benefits of the proposed project across all agricultural business in the region.

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

Prior to the announcement on 20 February 2023 that the corridor for the VNI West project would change, I had no knowledge of the proposed project and no understanding of it potentially impacting my farm business. I believe the community needs more time to respond to this project so a more accurate assessment of its costs and benefits can be made.

Peter and Donna Sexton , Terrappee

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P163

Name: Alison Parkinson

Location: Mount Prospect, VIC, Australia

Submission

I cannot comprehend the disregard to the landscape that we live in. I am an Artist. I moved here because of the beauty. People buy my artworks of this area. Melbourne people buy these works. This is the most amazingly beautiful landscapes. Von Gerard painted and drew these landscapes. Please don't destroy this beauty. People from all over the world come here.

Alison Parkinson

Mount Prospect

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P164

Name: Zac Johnson & Tessa Sexton

Location: Terrapee, VIC, Australia

Submission

Submission on the VNI West – Consultation Report

My family's property is located in Terrapee, roughly halfway between Charlton and Boort (inside the proposed area for the transmission infrastructure). My partner and I alongside our newborn son have recently began building what is to be our forever home on our property. We have great plans for our block which will include running lambs for meat purposes, grow our on hay and grain and also accommodate our passion for horses. We are very concerned with the proposal of the transmission infrastructure being built on our land not only for our financial wellbeing but for our safety and mental wellbeing. If this is built on our block (320acres) it will significantly reduce our capacity to run livestock and plant hay and grain crops. It will also greatly reduce the value of our land and as it is being very highlighted in current economic state of the country we are relying on our assets and livestock to financially support our little family. We also have concerns around safety, first and foremost for us and our son, operating machinery close to power is highly dangerous, and secondly our livestock, including our horses. The horses are work/competing horses within the campdraft community and our pride and joy with the addition of our broodmares to continue our bloodlines. We would not feel safe having them within the proximity of these transmission lines and they would also be likely to spook etc at the lines further adding to the risk of harm. When you combine these points together its not hard to understand this will add great stress and anxiety. Our mental health is just as important as our physical health and we know this will take a huge toll on us if it were to go ahead.

I have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes farmland that I operate a business on. I am concerned by the potential negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on my farming operations and business.

If the transmission infrastructure was to be built on my farmland, I am concerned that I have no information on what land access arrangements could be demanded by the transmission company before, during and after construction; what costs this would have on my business; and what my rights would be.

I am also concerned that there is no information available to me about the compensation that would be provided because of the impacts on my farming operations including reduced production and decreased land values. It is therefore impossible to provide an assessment on the costs to my business if the project was constructed on my land.

Whilst I have not been provided with information that details the impact of transmission infrastructure on my farmland, I believe the following issues will impact my ability to maintain a commercial farming operation now and into the future:

- decreased land value and loss of productive capacity;
- Inability to use tractors and machinery under powerlines;
- inability to irrigate under powerlines;
- inability to utilize emerging technologies such as drones and autonomous vehicles;
- refusal to give notice or inform landholders what chemicals have been used on site causing issues with vendor declarations;
- spread of weeds;
- failure to close gates;
- damage to crops;
- materials left on site causing damage to machinery.

These impacts must be considered when evaluating the true costs and benefits of the proposed project across all agricultural business in the region.

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

Prior to the announcement on 20 February 2023 that the corridor for the VNI West project would change, I had no knowledge of the proposed project and no understanding of it potentially impacting my farm business. I believe the community needs more time to respond to this project so a more accurate assessment of its costs and benefits can be made.

Zak Johnson & Tessa Sexton, Terrapee

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P165

Name: Phillip Lang

Location: Bolangum, VIC, Australia

Submission

VNI west Powerline Transmission Submission

I have only in the last two weeks become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a power transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The planned route on the map for this proposed transmission line includes farmland that I operate a business on. I am concerned by the detrimental negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on my farming operations, business and family.

We have not had any questions answered and a terrible consultation process where three people out the front of the local town hall, were unable to answer community member questions. A question as simple as how tall the towers are; is pitiful. This is not a proper consultation process and the AEMO should be ashamed that they were conducting a session like this.

The following issues are going to be impacted in our business operations and in the future.

- Mental health concerns – Beyond Blue states that male farmers die by suicide significantly high than those in the general and non-rural farming males
- Decreasing the value of land
- Loss of productivity capacity
 - o It won't take a week to install these lines. Therefore, sections of important land will be restricted and therefore – less crop, less grazing for sheep – is this to be fenced off and as whose expense?
- Damage to crops
- Restricted access to land around the transmission lines

- o Cannot run stock under powerlines
- o Cannot use machinery under the powerlines
- Cropping, spraying, spreading, harvesting
- Bio-security concerns
- Farm security
- GPS systems in tractors are affected.
- Damage to farm operating machinery with debris left in area.
- Livestock cannot be run under the transmission lines.
- Cannot fight fires under the powerlines. This is strongly linked with the Black Saturday fires in Kilmore East where the fires were started by the powerlines. The area that is proposed is all farmland – the summer months are hot, dry and have a VERY high fire risk without the transmission lines on them. The CFA is unable to fight the fires near or under these transmission lines – we could lose acres and acres of land, livestock, homes or worse people’s lives.
- When these powerlines are condemned – is this the farmers job to remove them?

I know that option 5 isn’t the answer for renewable energy transmission lines the Victorian Government and AEMO must put the lines underground along existing transport corridors not on highly productive farmland, which feeds so many people across the country. This will rip communities, families apart and have a great impact on the statistics regarding male farmers and suicide rates.

As a farming family who works on the land to ensure that our top produce and livestock feed so many people across the country, this is an insult that companies believe that they can come in and make such decisions in a terrible ‘professional consultation process’.

I strongly suggest that AEMO and Victorian Government rethink this proposal to another area – as they do not know the fight they are about to be up against. These transmission lines are not being erected on my property nor in my shire.

Phillip Lang

Bolangum

Northern Grampians Shire

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P166

Name: Sally McIntyre

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

To whom it may Concern

I am writing to voice my opposition to the Option 5 proposal in the AVP and Transgrid Project Assessment Draft Report (PADR).

Based on a very broad “blob” on a map the proposed route of the 500 kilovolt overhead transmission lines connecting Bulgana with Kerang will run through my home community of St Arnaud.

St Arnaud is a lovely rural area with a population of approx. 2318. Most of the cash flow that keeps St Arnaud alive comes from the agricultural industry in the area. This region supports a variety of cropping and livestock ventures and has supported farming families for over six generations on many of these farms.

St Arnaud has quite a variety of farm equipment businesses, grain and fertiliser business. Elders, Nutrien Ag Solutions, North West Ag Services, Goldacres, FarmPro, Precise Farm Solutions, O’Connors Farm Machinery, Ridley Agriproducts, and more that rely on local farms for their business. These businesses are major employers in the region, which also keeps cash flow in the town.

If these transmission lines are installed across our farming land, I am concerned of the detrimental impact that this will have on local farming operations and local businesses. I do acknowledge that there needs to be renewable energy links in Australia, however directing those through prime farmland will be very damaging to these farms and townships. Pushing this infrastructure through their properties will cause major disruption to business, and livelihood, causing a damaging ripple effect on St Arnaud’s future.

There are already other corridors pinpointed throughout Victoria that could be utilised to provide a better passage for these enormous power lines.

Some key aspects of the project that concern me also include:

- CFA cannot fight fires around this infrastructure and fallen power lines can cause devastating fires. Farmer’s preparations for the cropping season includes planned burns of their paddocks, however this in not

possible around these towers. If emergency intervention was required to fight any fires around these towers, how much would be lost before it was possible to be extinguished? How long would it take before it was safe for emergency crews to do their job? These powerlines may very well become a hazardous burden on emergency authorities in instances such as these.

- In addition, it will disrupt everyday farming activities.
- Permits required for machinery above 4.3 metres within the exclusion zone.
- Permits required for access within a 30m radius of the towers.
- Permits required for access 17m either side of the transmission line itself.
- Vital parts of farming would be unable to continue such as irrigation.
- Loss of grazing and cropping land.
- Open access to private property by the Transgrid etc.
- The consultation process with stakeholders has also been a joke. Transgrid stated a formal consultation process was designed to:
 - o Inform stakeholders of the investment need and proposed options to address it.
 - o Test the market for alternative and more efficient solutions.
 - o Explain to stakeholders the basis on which the preferred option has been selected.

A town meeting was held, with extremely short notice and the member that ran that meeting struggled to answer most questions put to them. Community members left more confused and concerned and no more enlightened than when they entered. There has not been adequate information given to stakeholders about the project.

Listen to those voicing their concerns against the project. Not only the farmers but also local communities. These towers will devalue farmers land, decrease the profits that can be made from their land, and possibly push many farms to failure. The mental health struggles this will cause will be devastating for farmers, who do not need another knife in the back. Farming is a hard life, don't make it harder.

If farmers do leave the district, then so do their partners, and children. There will be a ripple effect on schools, health services, & shopping district in an area that is already struggling to stay afloat.

It will also make it hard to entice new residents to the town with these ugly towers ruining the area. Its almost impossible to fill jobs in the town now, let alone adding this to the difficulties.

Find another path for these power lines to take, do not ruin our towns and families.

Sally McIntyre, St Arnaud Resident

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P167

Name: James Leeder

Location: Wimmera Plains, VIC, Australia

Submission

Submission on the VNI West – Consultation Report

I, James Leeder, am a 6th generation cattle and grains farmer located on the southeast end of the Wimmera Planes half way between Donald and St Arnaud. We are currently run a fully certified organic operation which will be greatly impacted by the proposed powerline infrastructure project as the ability to maintain organic status will not be allowed given the various maintenance requirements for the transmission lines, using chemical to spray weeds, un-restricted and unquarantined access to certified organic land etc.

The machinery height limits in and around the power lines will also be highly restrictive to our farming operations as much of our equipment is well above the specified working limits.

I have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales. The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes farmland that I operate a business on. I am concerned by the potential negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on my farming operations and business. If the transmission infrastructure was to be built on my farmland, I am concerned that I have no information on what land access arrangements could be demanded by the transmission company before, during and after construction; what costs this would have on my business; and what my rights would be. I am also concerned that there is no information available to me about the compensation that would be provided because of the impacts on my farming operations including reduced production and decreased land values. It is therefore impossible to provide an assessment on the costs to my business if the project was constructed on my land. Whilst I have not been provided with information that details the impact of transmission infrastructure on my farmland, I believe the following issues will impact my ability to maintain a commercial farming operation now and into the future:

- decreased land value and loss of productive capacity;
- Inability to use tractors and machinery under powerlines;
- inability to irrigate under powerlines;

- inability to utilize emerging technologies such as drones and autonomous vehicles;
- refusal to give notice or inform landholders what chemicals have been used on site causing issues with vendor declarations;
- spread of weeds;
- failure to close gates;
- damage to crops;
- materials left on site causing damage to machinery.

These impacts must be considered when evaluating the true costs and benefits of the proposed project across all agricultural business in the region. I believe the Victorian Government and AEMO should consider undergrounding the proposed project alongside existing transport corridors or on public land to ensure minimal disruption to farm businesses in the region.

Prior to the announcement on 20 February 2023 that the corridor for the VNI West project would change, I had no knowledge of the proposed project and no understanding of it potentially impacting my farm business. I believe the community needs more time to respond to this project so a more accurate assessment of its costs and benefits can be made.

Signed:

James Leeder, 10/04/2023

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P170

Name: Glenden Watts

Location: Coonooer Bridge, VIC, Australia

Submission

To Whom It May Concern:

The 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission investigated the Black Saturday fires where 125,000 hectares burnt, 1000 homes were destroyed, and 119 lives were tragically lost. The commission found that the blaze was caused by the negligence of SP AusNet and their assets managers Utility Services Group in the duty of safely maintaining the infrastructure under their control (ABC News - 30/10/2013). The plaintiff lawyers argued that SP AusNet misled landowners after the fires, installing conductors on farmer's land to gather evidence for the SP Ausnet defence case. Justice Jack Forrest has ruled that 'electricity contractors were trespassing' (ABC News - 30/10/2013). Keep this deplorable behaviour and lack of honesty front of mind when considering AEMO and SP AusNet's bungled attempt to rush through a flawed and less-than optimal solution to the VNI West project.

Initial plans were made in response to the Government's intent to transition to renewables, however after years of trying to get the project off the ground and generating much community backlash to the preferred and most direct routes, the VNI West project is now subject to the laws of NEVA (National Electricity (Victoria) Act) which seeks a new alternative option 'to expedite the development and delivery' of this project (VNI West Consultation Report, Pg 3 – 20/02/2023).

After critically analysing the 'VNI West consultation Report – Option assessment limitations', I find it illogical and scandalous that Option 5 has been deemed the newly preferred option. Despite having numerous identified limitations, Option 5 is also the only option which fails to pass near - or supply - Bendigo. As stated in the Consultation Report (Pg 13) 'AVO will continue to monitor required power into Bendigo, and if required can plan to do something in relation to the demand in the future and will outline this in the annual power plan report.' Surely delivering a holistic future-proof solution should be the fundamental requirement of an investment of this scale.

The Consultation Report (Pg 13) clearly identifies that an 'existing 220 KV transmission line easement that is already in place through the national park (that supplies Bendigo)...[and] that initial findings indicated that the new line could be erected on the same easement in the same location. Not only does a suitable easement already exist, but in so utilising this easement, this would eliminate further adverse social and environmental effects of

this project. This considered, removing the social and environmental weighting from the project's assessment rating (due to use of an existing easement), Option 3A would return a weighted score of 1.88 (compared with Option 5's score of 2.01). Option 3A is clearly demonstrated to be the best option for delivery of this project.

Option 5 is also identified as having less Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) development than that of Option 3A. The VNI West Consultation Report (Pg 14) identifies that Option 5 offers the lowest indicative improvements to REZ of all 7 options, and furthermore, the least REZ potential'. A \$3b+ project, and of all the options considered, the preferred option 'has the least REZ potential'. Are taxpayers really getting best value for money here? With time running out for AEMO, and landowners (understandably) outraged, it seems the longest route with the least number of voices is the quickest way to push this project through to meet election promises of Government.

This project will force easements through primary production farmland, substantially reducing farmable area. Reducing the area being farmed results in less food being produced, and drives further increasing of costs for consumers. The flow on effects to the viability and profitability of farming operations will be felt throughout every rural community. I doubt this has been appropriately considered or measured in AEMO's assessment of social impact.

I am not going to begin to try and understand the lifespan of a power grid, but I understand when the VNI West Consultation report (Pg 13) clearly outlines that Bendigo's grid is going to require further development in the near future and that this is likely to occur within the next 10 years. Option 1, 1A, 2, 3, 3A and 4 all incorporate a route via Bendigo. Option 5 does not. If Option 5 is to be assessed along with Options 1 through 4, then logically it must also consider the future cost of upgrading the infrastructure around Bendigo that would be achieved through the other options. Failing to do so simply flaws the entire analysis, and Option 5 must be removed from consideration in its entirety.

AEMO and Transgrid have illogically concluded that of the 7 options, the option with the lowest RMZ capacity and the most indirect route, is somewhere deemed the best. Option 5 has come about after several years of community backlash along the initially proposed route; the route which is more direct, more efficient and offer higher electrical capacity. Let's not forget the behaviour of those bodies who were happy to lie to landholders to collect evidence for their defence case back in 2009. Can we rely on the data presented in the VNI West Consultation Report? Was Option 5 only added after the other (clearly better, cheaper and more efficient) options got too hard?

Why, of the 7 options that have consumed so much time and effort, 6 of them (or 85%) are so heavily correlated, yet it is Options 5 (the late curve ball) which now comes up trumps? How accurate are the project costings when 85% of your times has been spent analysing the other 6 near-identical project routes? How can Option 5 be deemed the most cost effective when the route isn't even known? Is it also true that transmission lines can be erected with just 300m of a residence? How can we feel safe our own homes given the previous asset management history and deplorable behaviour of those who'll also be responsible for this project?

We may only be lightly populated along Option 5, but we are people with families. Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters who've been here for generations working, protecting and improving the precious land from which we make our livelihood, and provide the food for our nation.

I've raised a number of concerns with the conduct of AEMO, and the flawed assessment of options outlined in the VNI West Consultation Report. For these reasons, I know I speak for so many in my community in voicing my fierce objection to Option 5.

Sincerely,

Glenden Watts

Coonooer Bridge

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P171

Name: Glenn Watts

Location: Slaty Creek, VIC, Australia

Submission

I've recently been made aware of your invasive proposed power-line project.

I am concerned that there is limited information available to me about infrastructure involved in the construction and direct and indirect impacts on my farming operations. These include restrictions on access and farm use surrounding the proposed powerline towers , health impacts

I don't believe enough genuine consultation with local community members has been had. Without answers to basic questions we have been blind sighted by this proposition. This bullshit consultation would not pass the 'pub test'.

New technology that our machinery is now reliant on such as GPS, autonomous tractors and drones will all be impacted on severely with the inclusion of these powerlines on property. This does not include future technologies that haven't been developed as yet.

I feel that the AEMO is being very passive aggressive with this proposal by not providing adequate answers and relevant information to landholders. We will fight these intrusive powerlines with all the means we can muster

Kind regards,

Glenn Watts

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P172

Name: Hayley Batters

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

10th April 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I write in objection to the proposed VNI West high-capacity transmission line. On a personal level, the proposed line appears likely to impact my family as we have family farming enterprises and landholdings in the vicinity of the proposed line. As AEMO, TCV, AVP, AusNet or any other organisation involved in the proposed project have outrightly failed to provide exact locations of the proposed powerlines to stakeholders, specifically any landholders who will be impacted by the project, it is difficult to grasp the full extent of impact the proposed line could have on our enterprise and family. The main concerns I have include the negative impact of powerline installation on human health, property values, production losses, future land development and land use options.

From a broader community perspective, my biggest concern if the proposed transmission line proceeds, in any capacity or location, are the potential health impacts on individuals residing and/or working close by the powerlines.

A review of studies completed by Stephen Genuis and published in the Public Health

journal in 2008¹ extensively discusses the potential risk of electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure to human health. Reproductive dysfunction, including miscarriage, stillbirth, congenital disorders and preterm delivery were all associated with maternal exposure to EMF. While paternal exposure was linked to conditions including testicular abnormalities, atypical sperm, chromosomal anomalies and congenital defects in offspring. Higher rates of offspring with brain and spinal cord tumours were also observed where fathers' employment involved high levels of exposure to EMF's. The review examined two studies that found a link between EMF exposure and incidence of childhood leukaemia. One of those studies, a case control study published in the British Medical Journal, was reported to specifically link prenatal proximity to high voltage powerlines with increased incidence of childhood leukaemia.

Genius also discussed extensive research on EMF that was undertaken in Sweden and resulted in Swedish authorities officially recognising electromagnetic radiation as a contributor to ill health, subsequently categorising electro-hypersensitivity as a functional impairment. The effect of EMF's on central nervous system dysfunction is also explored in the review, with one study finding those living close to powerlines twice as likely to experience symptoms of depression compared to those who did not. Other studies included in the review had uncovered potential links between EMF exposure and numerous health conditions, including attention deficit disorder, asthma, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, insomnia, chronic fatigue and multiple sclerosis.

The author of the aforementioned review explores the human biological mechanisms

likely affected by EMF exposure. He asserts that most physiological functions of humans are electrochemical in nature. So, just as external electrical signals may interfere with a radio transmission or television signal, exposure to EMF's has potential to disrupt electrochemical signals in the human body, and in turn, impact the body's homeostasis and biological functioning.

History has presented many examples of political and economic motivation overriding proper scientific debate, leading to information suppression and a lack of proper investigation into potentially hazardous activities. Asbestos, DDT, tobacco cigarettes, lead arsenic pesticides and lead paint are just a few examples. In the face of outright denials of any hazardous effects of these products by manufacturers and politicians, it took decades of debate and research to expose their true, harmful nature. It perplexes me then, that despite existential studies demonstrating links between EMF and negative implications to human health, AEMO choose to outrightly dismiss any link between overhead powerlines and risks to human health both verbally at their community engagement events and in their "Fast Facts: Transmission Powerlines" community handout.

Sincerely,

Hayley Batters

St Arnaud VIC 3478

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P173

Name: Bradley McIntyre

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter to bring your attention the views and concerns of the proposed Option 5 of the VNI West Project.

I as a resident and land holder in the greater community am against any project which will impact the region, I've constructed a few of the greatest concerns of this proposal here below.

- i. The impacted views of the surrounding landscape, such as the Grampians mountain ranges, local Mount Bolagnum range, the corridor of trees following the Avon river winding its way throughout the land, which combined paint a beautiful picture of the land which is amplified by rich sunrises and sunsets which illuminate these highlights of the landscape. The installation of these 500kV lines will put a disgusting scar across the lands and be detrimental to these views which provide a great deal of enjoyment and mental fulfilment to locals and visitors alike.
- ii. The disruption of farming practices and reduction of useable farming land during the project construction and long term with easements put in place, which will divide many paddocks from what was prime farming land into unusable small parcels of land, especially for grazing stock and broad acre cropping which are the two main farming practises in Western Victoria, this will be detrimental to land holders now and into the future.
- iii. Flow on effects from this project will be felt widely throughout local communities, land impacted by this will have land values fall and production losses causing financial pain to farmers then onto local townships which

rely on the prosperity of local farmers to inject money into local businesses, schools and sporting clubs just to name a few places. Small communities rely on farmers to survive, when they are doing it tough the whole community does it tough also

iv. Destruction of culturally preserved land; there are many areas within our local area around St Arnaud and neighbouring townships which are of local and cultural significance which no doubt will be impacted by this proposed project, which have been protected and nurtured by locals and farmer groups

v. Mental wellbeing being affected of people due to stresses incurred from this project, reduction of viable land and invasion of owned and neighbouring land, unsightly power transmission lines and towers which will destroy the picturesque views of the land, resulting in lower moral to locals and visitors alike.

vi. Risk to local communities and lands due to restrictions around the easements created by the powerlines, especially during summer months and high fire risk times, if fires breakout during these times and unable to be controlled or contained because of these easements could be the difference between containing a blaze or burning out an entire districts, rural properties and homes.

These are just a few of many concerns around the VNI West Project Option 5 proposal, which in itself has been very

poorly communicated to concerned parties who in turn cannot get any clear answers to and concerns raised. I and others

ask that these concerns be taken on board in the decision to thrust this project onto our community.

Thank you for your time,

Bradley McIntyre

Concerned landholder

St Arnaud, Victoria.

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P175

Name: Steve Clark

Location: Gordon, VIC, Australia

Submission

12 April 2023

I thank AEMO Victorian Planning (AVP) and Transgrid for the opportunity to provide stakeholder feedback on the VNI West Consultation Report – Options Assessment, February 2023.

I am a landholder in Gordon, in the direct path of the proposed Western Renewables Link (WRL). As the WRL proponent 'AusNet' is yet to submit the required Environment Effects Statement and the WRL is intended to connect to VNI West under AEMO's 2022 Integrated System Plan (ISP), outcomes of the VNI West RIT-T and WRL EES will be consequential to both projects.

At my location in Wadawurrung country (occupied by the people William Buckley lived with), the proposed WRL will require 1.3km of remnant and regenerated eucalypt forest be cleared through private land within the North Gordon Goldfield on the Muckleford Fault.

This location has a gold rush history dating back to the 1850's (see Mount Hope Quartz mining company AKA Potts Lease). The AusNet design places a tower directly over a known gold bearing quartz reef at the Ray of Hope mine site which was worked by Bolwarrah and Gordon's Amalgamated during the 1930's depression era. This mine is

directly between the Corbett Brothers and Gordon Gold mine which is on the Victorian Heritage Register (H7722-0046). Other sites on private property are yet to be correctly recorded. This is a designated bushfire prone area in a wildlife corridor connected to the Wombat State Forest and water catchments that supply Ballarat and Geelong. AusNet's limited ecological survey has identified species classified as endangered under the EPBC and FFG Acts. The WRL at Haydens Hill will place power lines at the highest point in the light aircraft flight path between Melbourne and Ballarat. This location is less than 7 km from Kerrit Barrett (see alternate spellings), a location of immense cultural significance and also a paragliding launch site. The WRL would place high voltage overhead power lines between 'Kirrit Barrett' and the Wombat State Forest where Wedge-tailed Eagles nest. My West boundary neighbour, also in the path of the WRL is a Springbank potato farmer on the edge of a valuable and strategically important prime agricultural district with high rainfall, a1 beneficial use groundwater and rich volcanic soil. My South East boundary is the start of a Rural Living Zone with many homes within 300m of the proposed transmission corridor. 7km to my East in Bunding, the proposed WRL will pass through land owned by and run directly next to, the home of Michael Tuohy of the Eureka Stockade. After which, it is proposed to run over the Pykes Creek reservoir which is a public access reservoir used for recreational boating, through Melbourne's urban growth zone, Merrimu reservoir, through a sand quarry on another fault, and in front of an aerodrome. It's hard to imagine a worse possible route. The VNI West PADR FAQ's state that HVDC technology was ruled out as an option for VNI West.

The VNI West Consultation Report – Options Assessment again demonstrates continued reluctance or inability to apply a triple bottom line assessment to new transmission projects

and appropriately weigh the significant advantages of underground HVDC transmission.

Communities have clearly communicated that opposition to greenfield transmission will evaporate if new transmission projects with an expected asset life of 50+ years are delivered with technology (underground HVDC) analogous to transmission projects in countries which are further advanced in their transition to renewables. As such, the multi-criteria analysis (MCA) has failed to capture the salient social, environmental and engineering factors that will impact the primary project objectives: to reduce the risk of delays, to deliver the project at a reasonable cost to consumers (over the expected life of the project).

Existing road and rail transport corridors extend to every Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) identified in the ISP. The use of underground HVDC would unlock these corridors for transmission.

In choosing an 'all eggs in one basket' overhead transmission approach, AVP and Transgrid are creating supercritical network links where a single point of failure has enormous cascading consequences.

I implore AVP, AusNet, Transgrid and Energy Ministers to review the 2020 Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements Report and begin an honest triple bottom line assessment into underground HVDC transmission.

Regards,

Steve Clark

Gordon Victoria

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P179

Name: Samantha Harris

Location: Carapooee, VIC, Australia

Submission

To whom it may Concern

I am writing to voice my opposition to the Option 5 proposal in the AVP and Transgrid Project Assessment Draft Report (PADR).

Based on an inaccurate “blob” on a map for the proposed route of the 500 kilovolt overhead lines connecting Bulgana with Kerang will run through my home community of St Arnaud.

St Arnaud is a picturesque rural area with a population of approx. 2318. Made famous for its silo art and a tourism destination for travellers from Melbourne to Mildura. Most of the cash flow that keeps St Arnaud alive comes from the agricultural industry in the area. This region supports a variety of cropping and livestock ventures and has supported farming families for over six generations on many of these farms.

St Arnaud has quite a variety of farm equipment businesses, grain and fertiliser business. Elders, Nutrien Ag Solutions, North West Ag Services, Goldacres, FarmPro, Precise Farm Solutions, O’Connors Farm Machinery, Ridley Agriproducts, and even more in the surrounding towns that rely on local farms for their business. These businesses are major employers in the region, which also keeps cash flow in the town and surrounding.

If these transmission lines are installed across our farming land, I am concerned of the detrimental impact that this will have on local farming operations and local businesses. I do acknowledge that there needs to be renewable energy links in Australia, however directing those through prime farmland will be very damaging to these farms and townships. Pushing this infrastructure through their properties will cause major disruption to business, and livelihood, causing a damaging ripple effect on St Arnaud’s future.

There are already other corridors pinpointed throughout Victoria that could be utilised to provide a better passage for these enormous power lines.

Some key aspects of the project that concern me also include:

- CFA cannot fight fires around this infrastructure and fallen power lines can cause devastating fires. Farmer's preparations for the cropping season includes planned burns of their paddocks, however this is not possible around these towers. If emergency intervention was required to fight any fires around these towers, how much would be lost before it was possible to be extinguished? How long would it take before it was safe for emergency crews to do their job? These powerlines may very well become a hazardous burden on emergency authorities in instances such as these.

- In addition, it will disrupt everyday farming activities.

- Permits required for machinery above 4.3 metres within the exclusion zone.

- Permits required for access within a 30m radius of the towers.

- Permits required for access 17m either side of the transmission line itself.

- Vital parts of farming would be unable to continue such as irrigation.

- Loss of grazing and cropping land.

- Open access to private property by the Transgrid etc.

- The consultation process with stakeholders has also been non-existent. Transgrid stated a formal

consultation process was designed to:

- o Inform stakeholders of the investment need and proposed options to address it.

- o Test the market for alternative and more efficient solutions.

- o Explain to stakeholders the basis on which the preferred option has been selected.

A town meeting was held, with extremely short notice and the member that ran that meeting struggled to answer most questions put to them. Community members left more confused and concerned and no more enlightened than when they entered. There has not been adequate information given to stakeholders about the project.

Listen to those voicing their concerns against the project. Not only the farmers but also local communities. These towers will devalue farmers' land, decrease the profits that can be made from their land, and possibly push many farms to failure. The mental health struggles this will cause will be devastating for farmers, who do not need another knife in the back. Farming is a hard life, don't make it harder.

If farmers do leave the district, then so do their partners, and children. There will be a ripple effect on schools, health services, & shopping district in an area that is already struggling to stay afloat.

It will also make it hard to entice new residents to the town with these ugly towers ruining the area. Its almost impossible to fill jobs in the town now, let alone adding this to the difficulties.

Find another path for these power lines to take, do not ruin our towns and families futures

Samantha Harris

Carpooee West Resident

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P181

Name: Marcia McIntyre

Location: Kanya, VIC, Australia

Submission

We live on and operate our mixed cropping and livestock farm in Kanya/Wallaloo East which is just west of the Bolangum State Forrest and potentially in the path of VNI West. We love where we live, we love the gorgeous views we have from our house and business looking to Mount Bolangum on one side and the Grampians on the other. We love looking over our and our neighbour's paddocks, it is the most amazingly beautiful place to live and work. The visual amenity is an extremely important part of our enjoyment of where we live. We have 6 young children and it is very important to us that they get to grow up on the farm, that they get to play in great big open spaces, that they are involved in the business and farming from a young age, helping in the sheep yards, fixing machinery and doing all of the farm kid things. Growing up surrounded by the natural beauty of our area. It is nightmarish to think that every time they step outside to enjoy our piece of paradise instead they may be exposed to overbearing barbaric metal giants glaring at them wherever they go.

It is also important to note that for famers that live on their land like we do, the impact from these horrendous powerlines is double what it is for the average person. It will have an extremely negative impact on every aspect of our life, as unlike other people who head off to work, we live and work in the same place, so in one fell swoop our home life and work life is equally trashed. It will affect us every minute of our day, even on the weekend and in our communities, when these towers are forced on the farmer the sentence is indeed extreme. The impact to our home and family life is catastrophic, heart breaking in fact, it makes me want to cry as I type about it, it is so very depressing. If these powerlines are placed in close proximity to our home and business we would probably have to move, no one should be put in this position. The kids would no longer grow up the way we want, immersed in the everyday farm activities with their dad, our family would pay a very heavy price for these powerlines.

We were looking to build a new house near the rest of our business infrastructure, (near our existing house) we have been meticulously planning it for years, the potential of these horrible transmission towers has put this on hold, this is another immediate life changing and distressing impact on our family.

A farmer's connection to his farm land is a deep cultural linking, the bond forged through growing up in the paddocks, playing in the dirt, raising pet lambs, planting trees through to growing crops and then passing on the

particular ways of the land on to their own children. It is the ultimate legacy and its importance goes beyond just its ability to provide financially for the family but to it being an integral part of who they are. The desecration of this land with monstrous towers has an enormous emotional impact on the farmer and his affinity with his land.

The National Farmer Wellbeing Report devastatingly indicates that close to half of farmers (45%) have had thoughts of self harm or suicide while close to a third (30%) have attempted self-harm or suicide. Given how distressing just the thought of these powerlines traversing through our farm land is, it is expected that this process will trigger an extreme mental health crisis in our area and at worse induce an increase in suicide. What support services are being proposed, on the ground, REAL services that will ensure that this doesn't occur?

It does seem that by the cavalier, disrespectful and disingenuous behaviour towards those affected by Route 5 that the affected farmers perceived poor mental health is a weakness that the Vic Gov and AEMO intend to exploit. At best there has clearly been no sensitivity (honesty and respect couldn't even be managed) in dealing with one of the most high risk cohort in regards to mental health in the state of Victoria. Shame on you AEMO and Victorian Government!

There was extreme surprise at finding our business and residential house in the potential pathway of electrical monoliths, smashing their way through our beautiful countryside with reckless unconcern. Finding out by chance with well over half of the consultation period already passed, AEMO and Victorian Government have indulged in the most farcical excuse of 'consultation' ever seen.

The consultation, or complete lack thereof, is one of the most concerning aspects of AEMO's and Vic Govs behaviour. We understand that they have had special advisors telling them how to better consult after their debacles further South. They have been directly given the information and they have still chosen to consult in this particular manner. There can be no excuses in these circumstances. It tells us very clearly what they think of us and provides a horrifying insight into how we will be treated if we are the sad, unlucky land holders of where the powerlines actually traverse.

This is a fourth generation farm, the land has been meticulously cared for and nurtured, its value both as a business, to provide for our family and as a place of living and growing is paramount to our survival and happiness. We do not want the transmission lines to destroy the value of our land, reduce the productivity of our business or destroy the amenity and we definitely do not want to pass on land desecrated in such a way to the next generation if we can help it. Landcare was originally started locally in this area and it must be understood that farmers have been caring for their land for generations.

The powerlines will affect our farm business in many different ways, all negative, the main ones are:

- the actual reduction in land value;
- the banks assessment of reduction in land value;
- loss of productive capacity;

- inability to use some machinery under powerlines;
- inability to irrigate under powerlines;
- inability to utilize emerging technologies such as drones and autonomous vehicles;
- refusal to give notice or inform landholders what chemicals have been used on site causing issues with vendor declarations;
- spread of weeds;
- failure to close gates;
- damage to crops;
- materials left on site causing damage to machinery and stock;
- damage to the local road network;
- increased bush fire risk;
- biosecurity breaches.

There seems to be a complete lack of understanding and lack of any sort of genuine care about the true impact to farming businesses. It is imperative that appropriate and generous compensation is part of the process, this must be for the entire life of the project and is a major part of attempting to achieve some sort of social licence.

I believe the Victorian Government and AEMO should underground the proposed project alongside existing transport corridors or on public land to ensure minimal disruption to farm businesses in the region. It is our understanding that some areas and some communities, particularly those that are benefitting financially from the Wind Farms are not opposed to the powerlines. We would suggest placing them through these areas will reduce delays for the project and reduce the stress and trauma for those that are opposed to them.

There are a number of threatened flora and fauna in the Kanya, Wallaloo East and Bolagum localities, with their habitats throughout our farm land they include a number of listed under EPBC, FFG and EVC Acts. These include a number of birds, reptiles, mammals and endangered woodlands, some (but not all) of these are:

Threatened Fauna Species	EPBC Act	FFG Act
Tree Goanna <i>Varanus varius</i>		Listed
Fat-tailed Dunnart <i>Sminthopsis crassicaudata</i>		Listed
Brush-tailed Phascogale or Tuan Phascogale <i>tapoatafa</i>		Listed

Striped Legless Lizard <i>Delma impar</i>	V	Listed
Birds		
Painted Honeyeater <i>Grantiella picta</i>	V	Listed
Swift Parrot <i>Lathamus discolor</i>	C E	Listed
White-throated Needletail <i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	V	Listed
Spotted Harrier <i>Circus assimilis</i>		Listed
Square-tailed Kite <i>Lophoictinia isura</i>		Listed
Powerful Owl <i>Ninox strenua</i>		Listed
Barking Owl <i>Ninox connivens</i>		Listed

Flora

Buloke Woodlands listed as Endangered under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

There are many more threatened flora and fauna species living in the area that are not listed here, but we will ensure become apparent during any EIS.

There is also regular extensive flooding within our areas, with enormous damage to road, crops and infrastructure. It is important to note that this flooding, which occurs regularly may not be properly documented as no one ever bothers to assess the flooding in this area. Therefore it may not be showing up in your desktop studies, but it does occur regularly.

Our farming communities are also mobilising to fight this project, getting legal and independent advice. We will delay the project with every means possible.

The outcome of the assessment undertaken in the RITT:

The report does not present the information in a transparent or user-friendly manner, nor is all relevant information included. There was ZERO information provided at any drop in session, webinar or meeting, they were such a deliberate waste of our time and effort. Experts Professor Simon Bartlett AM and Bruce Mountain 118 page submission on apparent non-compliances and major errors indicate a net economic loss, meaning that electricity consumers will pay higher bills over the life of the project and beyond. This goes directly against the National Electricity Objective and is certainly contrary to governments claims that they are working at lowering

electricity costs using renewable energy. It seems that the only winners out of this project are the renewable energy farms and the contractor constructing the transmission lines.

Please ensure that AEMO's RITT and Professor Simon Bartlett AM and Bruce Mountain's submission are both independently reviewed. This is vital for correct and careful planning decisions to be made. These experts with considerable experience between them describe this project as the 'biggest mistake in transmission planning in living history'. It is imperative that this review is enacted to ensure that no mistakes are made. This should be obvious to the Victorian Government. The independent review is necessary to ensure fairness for all affected parties but also for all consumers of whom this is supposed to benefit, because if it does not benefit them, who does it benefit? And why is it being built at all?

MCA

A desktop assessment should only make up a small part of the selection criteria for a chosen route. The MCA does NOT capture the salient environmental, social and engineering factors which may impact on the TIMELY development. Some of the assessments and assumptions are so far from reality that they are actually insulting to the people and areas involved.

Environmentally it does not seem to allow for the large amount of flora and fauna listed under EPBC, FFG and EVC (refer above for details). Many of these endangered species living happily in the habitat provided by our farm land. The regular flooding of large section of our farm and general local area is most likely not recorded anywhere, another reason for transmission lines not to be built in this area.

It is unclear, why the actual MCA is not available for us to comment on, especially when feedback on its accuracy is requested. Some detail would have allowed for people to comment specifically on their known areas, allowing for a more accurate model. This was another deliberate decision by AEMO to withhold this information and successfully stifle meaningful responses.

The Note on Table 15 for the Social objective for Option 5, 'Highest likelihood of achieving social licence sufficient to obtain permits' etc – is such a ludicrously subjective judgement, on what possible data or assumptions could this have been made? That farmers and people living in the country are stupid?

The main social issue is not rated in the MCA, social licence, of which AEMO, Vic Government and the entire project is failing terribly. Legitimacy is gone with the Ministerial Order under NEVA, credibility is gone with the complete lack of any real attempt to consult and trust cannot begin to be forged with such a woeful beginning.

It seems that AEMO and the Victorian Government do not yet understand what the biggest threat to the timely completion of the project is, the PEOPLE.

The community has come together and will fight together to stop the progression of these transmission lines at every possible stage, causing extensive delays and extreme cost blow outs.

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P182

Name: Stuart Gould

Location: Mysia, VIC, Australia

Submission

I am part of a 2800ha family farm operating in the Mysia Wychitella area south of Boort. We have culturally significant wetlands to our north & Mount Egbert granites & Wychitella forest Parks Land catchments to our south, with watercourse grasslands in between. Our farm is situated on the back bone of the Main Waranga-Western irrigation channel. We produce lucerne as part of our irrigation enterprise & intend to continue its development. We run up to 4000 sheep, growing wool & prime lamb and grow around 400 ha of crop. Our operation is based around using the least amount of unnatural inputs as possible while utilising natural elements to their fullest potential.

I have recently become aware of the Victorian government and Aemo's proposal to build an overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales. I have found it extremely difficult to obtain any details of this proposal.

I fear my ability to farm efficiently will be enormously compromised should transmission towers be built across our farm. Inability to use machinery near or under powerlines would be a crippling disadvantage, splitting paddocks with power lines would equally stifle efficiency. The disallowance of irrigation, the ceased operation of drones, the spread of weeds, damage to pasture, mistothering of lambs, increased traffic, damage to crops and compaction of soil, the accelerated damage to our already compromised roads, failure to shut gates & resultant escaped animals would further erode our ability to produce food.

The devaluation of our property & loss of production & efficiency would be financially crippling, most likely prohibiting the continuation of a commercially viable family farm business.

These impacts must be acknowledged and deeply considered when evaluating the true cost and benefits of the proposed project across all business in our region.

I believe strong consideration be given to under grounding this project. The longer term benefits would far out weigh the extra initial investment.

This project has been quickly sprung on us (20feb ,2023)allowing very little time to even comprehend the chaos it would bring to our lives and the ugliness it would leave behind, we need more time to receive real consultation from Aemo , not the pathetic lip service we've had so far.

Yours sincerely Stuart Gould

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P184

Name: Simon Goode

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

This is not confidential, I am happy for this to be published

I am writing to express my utmost opposition to the proposed VNI West project.

My name is Simon Goode and our family farm spans 10-25 km North of St.Arnaud. We are right in the firing line of these massive structures.

These proposed overhead powerlines will have major impacts on our farm.

Not only are they disruptive to our cropping operations, horrible to look at, a risk for biosecurity and taking up highly productive farm land, our main concern in they are exceptionally dangerous.

Bush fire concern is top of mind after powerlines started the black Saturday fires north of

Melbourne. The royal commission into these black Saturday fires made a recommendation that all future power line infrastructure be put underground.

Mental health is already a massive issue in regional agricultural communities. The suicide rates are already higher than in any other sector. This project will exacerbate this, with families forced to hand over land they have been stewards of for 6 or 7 generations.

AEMO's consultation with us as landowners has been appalling. This project is being rushed and not properly thought through, and we will be the ones who untimely pay the price.

Our farm paddocks are set up in 1.6 x 1.6km blocks. If these powerlines were to pass through

diagonally, we stand to lose 21ha (8%) of farm land in one paddock, for up to 2 years during construction. Let alone the ongoing, life long implications of these easements, and the maintenance traffic passing through our property. Scale that up over our 3300ha enterprise and you can imagine why suicide rates will sky rocket. Who is going be held accountable for this??

The WRL and VNI West project is fundamentally floored. Some of the figures quoted in the justification of this are 13 years old. The project needs to be scrapped until a complete and transparent review of energy generation and transmission has been completed.

Simon Goode

Goode Family Farming

St.Arnaud

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P185

Name: Megan Cossar

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

My family's farm lies within the area proposed for VNIWest Option 5. I'm opposed to this proposal. I don't want this problem just to be shifted to another community either. I'm also opposed to the transmission project overall.

I support a national transition to renewables. The strength of renewables is in their decentralised generation and storage. I agree with Simon Bartlett and Bruce Mountain's critic of the AEMO Consultation Report. This transmission project is a monumental mistake. AEMO's priority of corporate interests results in a lack of vision, planning and genuine community consultation. The environmental benefits are dubious. The technology is crude. The compensations are insulting. The current proposals are causing massive stress to the communities directly concerned, some already marginalised communities.

Future generations will wonder what we were thinking if we blight the landscape with 80m towers. There is a real opportunity to invest in the future of Australia. Embracing new technologies and putting people and environment over profits.

Let's think this through properly and get it right.

Sincerely,

Megan Cossar

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P186

Name: Megan Hollis

Location: Geelong, VIC, Australia

Submission

To Whom it May Concern,

I feel compelled to write to you to express my concerns, after recently visiting my family and community in Yeungroon East (south east of Charlton) last week. The prospect of the proposed twin tower, interconnector traversing and dividing properties has left the community feeling firstly outraged, but now I witnessed a real sense of despondency, bordering on depression by some farmers. All have battled so hard through adverse seasons, depressed commodity prices and various other challenges. All proudly care for their land, value their heritage, protect local history and safeguard both indigenous culture and all that they and their ancestors proudly strived so hard to protect.

As the younger farmers embrace new technology, to modernise farms to make them more viable, they are fearful that their new investments will be unusable on large areas of their farmland. Autonomous tractors, drones and other developing technology suited to broad acre farming, will be unworkable with these power lines and 100 meter easements crossing diagonally through properties.

The first question I want answered is, "why was the interconnector corridor changed to a much longer and more costly route"? The second point that needs to be clarified is that "it has been printed that this new route will harvest far less renewable energy, why would you choose a less effective and less profitable route"?

The reasons seem obvious, you have deliberately chosen to take a more costly and longer corridor, harvesting less renewables, because it is a more sparsely populated area and you feel you can bully these smaller communities, hence fewer people to offer resistance. I feel that it is offensive to these small communities, already battling for survival, to virtually classify them as disposable. It seems like a callus decision, to bow to the pressure of a more populated area, to change to less populated areas. Why do these communities matter less? So much for State Governments pretending to govern for all.

It is apparent that the interconnector has to go somewhere, but why a longer, more expensive and a far less efficient one. It is upon those who can, to both promote and support these communities. Surely you don't want, on your conscience, that you have helped cause their demise.

Awaiting your reply,

Megan Hollis

(from Geelong, formerly Charlton)

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P187

Name: Neale Posthlethwaite

Location: Gooroc, VIC, Australia

Submission

I am a sixth generation farmer, who along with my family produces wheat, barley, faba beans and oilseed canola grains on our property in Gooroc, Victoria. Our dryland farm relies on innovative cropping strategies such as controlled traffic farming and GPS technology to make efficient use of our resources to farm sustainably through the challenging weather conditions nature provides.

I have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes farmland that I operate a business on. I am concerned by the potential negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on my farming operations and business.

If the transmission infrastructure was to be built on my farmland, I am concerned that I have no information on what land access arrangements could be demanded by the transmission company before, during and after construction; what costs this would have on my business; and what my rights would be.

I am also concerned that there is no information available to me about the compensation that would be provided because of the impacts on my farming operations including reduced production and decreased land values. It is therefore impossible to provide an assessment on the costs to my business if the project was constructed on my land.

Whilst I have not been provided with information that details the impact of transmission infrastructure on my farmland, I believe the following issues will impact my ability to maintain a commercial farming operation now and into the future:

- Decreased land value and loss of productive capacity;
- Inability to use tractors and machinery under powerlines;
- Inability to irrigate under powerlines;
- Inability to utilize emerging technologies such as drones and autonomous vehicles;

- Refusal to give notice or inform landholders what chemicals have been used on site causing issues with vendor declarations;
- Spread of weeds;
- Failure to close gates;
- Damage to crops;
- Materials left on site causing damage to machinery.

These impacts must be considered when evaluating the true costs and benefits of the proposed project across all agricultural business in the region.

With declining terms of trade making farming profitability more precarious, another burden on our already stretched resources is not welcome. When the channel system went through the district we all put up with the inconvenience of carved up paddocks, but we were able to utilise the resource to compensate for the inconvenience. The key difference though compared to this powerline project is that water flows downhill; no politics was involved about a preferred route, as it could only go one way. This made it fair for everyone. This powerline however appears to be entirely planned based on politics, not using the best economically or most efficient capacity supply, just the route providing the least political fallout. As farmers we are a small sector of the community and it appears our voice is less important. The recent piping of the channel system has benefitted the community immensely, especially making our paddocks more uniform, allowing removal of weedy uncropped areas and making farm layout more efficient. These powerline towers will return the paddocks to this carved up state.

Our farming system relies on GPS guidance to reduce overlap, a 5% cost to our business. The high voltage towers mask the differential correction signal coming from our local 2cm base station network making the accuracy we require to farm useless. The use of large machinery (36m boomsprayer) will be impacted if we can't crop underneath these powerlines. Compaction also costs us a lot of yield – about \$150/ha – we have spent a lot of money over many years getting machinery configured to reduce this cost. The construction phase of tower installation will return our paddocks back to a compacted state, another cost to our business.

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

Prior to the announcement on 20 February 2023 that the corridor for the VNI West project would change, I had no knowledge of the proposed project and no understanding of it potentially impacting my farm business. I believe the community needs more time to respond to this project so a more accurate assessment of its costs and benefits can be made.

Regards,

Neale Postlethwaite, Farmer, Gooroc, Victoria 3477.

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P188

Name: Gerald Feeny

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

I am a farmer with property fifteen kilometres North of St. Arnaud and within the footprint of the proposed transmission line. Our family have been in this district for over one hundred and fifty years and intend to remain farming long into the future.

There are a number of key failings I see in this route that seem to not be addressed in what appears to be undue haste that followed a Federal Government announcement of the schemes only last October.

At this time much of the farming land in the proposed path of this power line was facing significant flooding problems during an extremely wet spring. The damage to our waterways and road systems are only partially repaired at this stage, with many roads and bridges unrepaired and in a dangerous condition for public safety.

This of course raises the issue of the use of our road system to carry very heavy vehicles and the multiple movements of materials to the build sites. I see no provision for upgrading already poor road infrastructure to cope with the extra traffic that will surely add to the existing damage or create new problems to be borne by the local community.

Our family is proud of the stands of trees and remnant vegetation on our property that we have maintained through the generations. We fenced off twenty hectares over thirty years ago and the regeneration of native species is a sight to behold. Our farm is not unusual in the area but it does highlight the scattered and fractured nature of the remaining natural habitat. I note that the State Government has declared an end to any logging in native forests, and yet the native flora and fauna of our region is far more rare and endangered than the Eastern highland forests. The proposal will clear all the trees along the easement path for hundreds of kilometres. The Western Highway duplication was held up because of protests by the indigenous community who had identified two trees of cultural significance – this proposal would remove thousands of trees. An environmentally indefensible action in my opinion.

The path of the VNI WEST skirts along the western side of the St. Arnaud Range in a North/South direction before it heads in an easterly direction towards Charlton.

There are state forests and national parks in these forested hills as well as the town of St. Arnaud. I have been a CFA member for forty years and know that in our planning and minds is the possibility that a narrow front fire running in farmland driven by hot northerlies could present a fire front of many kilometres across if a SW wind change occurs and that would drive the fire directly at the town and bush. You then have a huge and potentially lethal fire on your hands. This scenario played out in numerous locations in our recent and deadly fire outbreaks.

The presence of a high voltage line and easement that will curtail fire fighting efforts in both time and capability. I believe that these easements are a 'no go zone' under state legislation. The use of aerial water bombers has been a wonderful addition to our firefighting efforts and a number of years ago saved our home when a fire raced toward us driven by a SW wind change. The use of these craft is severely hampered by the proposed path of this line and put firefighters in a dreadful situation should a fire run along the easement and we have to wait for it to leave the zone.

While these high voltage lines can arc to the ground in heavy smoke or catastrophic failure, they can also as in the scenario I described, leave firefighters facing a burning easement while waiting for a now larger fire to exit far enough to deploy our units - our backs to the bush and the town we are tasked to protect. The proposed path is far too close to the difficult terrain and communities in the bush areas. The burden of protecting property and the community from this new hazard will fall to the CFA and its already overstretched volunteers and staff, adding more burden to small rural communities. Unless the transmission line operators provide extra firefighting capacity to the areas the power line crosses, then they are merely using country people to push plans which mostly benefit cities.

The short submission period and the lack of any effective consultation on this VNI WEST has already received much attention as most of the communities involved only discovered the proposal by reading a Weekly Times article less than a month back. What a gross failure on behalf of government and the AEMO!

Ministers continue to proudly announce renewable projects are being fast-tracked and that they are providing certainty to investors in this space. Our space and our communities, that will bear the direct impact of these decisions, are not mentioned as a second thought or even an after-thought. If you wish to make rural people angry and unsupportive of renewable energy projects then the current consultation process and pronouncements by government ministers should be considered an outstanding success.

This proposal looks rushed and full of unidentified problems that must be addressed before any decision on a final path is taken.

As H.L. Mencken put it "For every complex problem, there's a solution that is simple, neat, and wrong."

Regards,

Gerald Feeny.

Gooroc

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P189

Name: Julie McIntyre

Location: [Undetermined]

Submission

TO AEMO REPRESENTATIVE

I am in a farming partnership, and I am appalled at the way the proposed transmission line option 5 has been introduced into our community without a care in the world for Us Farming Families and Local People by sneakily pushing it through.

It will cause significant impacts to the environment and cost of living which will effect every single person and animal.

The food source from cropping will be greatl reduced to feed people and animals as a great amount of prime farming ground will be unusable which will create a knock-on effect for farming income, business and employment which will LEAD TO UNEMPLOYMENT.

WHAT!! ARE WE GOING TO RELY ON IMPORTS?

Our farming ground will depreciate. Who. Will want to buy good prime farming ground that a chunk is unusable for cropping, which would impact on your income. And who wants to be buying ground that has ugly monstrous eye sores running through NO ONE.

This will cause DEPRESSION and SUICIDE's in the farming family.

THESE LINES SHOULD BE PUT UNDER GROUND SO THERE IS NOT SUCH A BIG IMPACT ON PEOPLE'S AND ANIMALS LIVES AND LIVELIHOOD.

REGARDS

Julie McIntyre

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P190

Name: Tim and Susan Lockhart

Location: Berrimal, VIC, Australia

Submission

PROPOSED POWERLINES

Along with my husband, we are farmers; we were raised by farmers and now we are the parents of two young farmers.

Life on land is pretty darn good, we have our challenges but overall, we love what we do; there is an enormous amount of job satisfaction when we get things right.

Like all farmers, we work hard, we put in long hours in a self-employed occupation that's a gamble. With a gamble comes risks, stress, sleepless nights and mental health issues. Much of this goes unseen as farmers are the great pretenders. Farmers make passing comments such as, "she'll be right mate," "it'll work out," "it will be what it will be!" This attitude has helped us through many tough times but maybe it's time to get tough!

Recently our district has been blind sighted with the news that 500kV towers, the size of the MCG lights and powerlines, will be draped across farmland. The proposed route is from Dinawan to Bulgana, however details of the precise course of the double-circuit overhead transmission line appear to be confidential with the AEMO (Australian Energy Market Operator) keeping their cards very close to their chest. I believe, and I think that most of us (the landholders/farmers) believe, that the AEMO knows exactly where the powerlines will run.

Many questions are being raised by farmers regarding the health risks, land loss due to easements, increased fire dangers, limitations of machinery use, restrictions of irrigation and devaluation of land. Answers to these pressing and prevailing questions are not being provided by AEMO. It is our valuable farmland; surely, we deserve transparent and accurate answers to our concerns. There is fear and frustration circulating amongst the farmers with many expressing that not one dollar of compensation will be worth the negative effects.

Yours faithfully

Susan & Tim Lockhart

Berrimal. Vic.

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P191

Name: Greg McGurk

Location: Charlton, VIC, Australia

Submission

To Whom It May Concern

As a fifth generation farming family on land South East of Charlton, we are feeling let down and disappointed with the undemocratic process being used to supposedly provide a solution to the absolute disaster our State energy policy has become.

There is minimal information, token consultation and a total lack of transparency relating to the possibility of large transmission lines and towers carving a swathe through our property and that of our neighbours.

Traversing our prime agricultural land with these ugly monstrosities is testament to our supposed leaders' lack of ingenuity, imagination and regard for landholders - I shudder to consider where this is all going to end.

The social, economic, environmental and cultural ramifications will have a huge impact on the affected communities for years to come.

Is this really the answer to our power problems – could this massive investment be better spent encouraging and exploring less intrusive alternatives.

We are forced to blindly follow the edicts of seemingly incompetent unqualified politicians, and bungling bureaucrats who are making life changing decisions about our future.

In a sensible world, those in power would take a deep breath and consider all options in a timely and meaningful manner so that the best decisions are made for generations to come.

Country people matter too.

Greg McGurk

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P192

Name: Marcus McGurk

Location: Charlton, VIC, Australia

Submission

To Whom It May Concern

My name is Marcus McGurk and I live and work on a fifth generation family farm 8 kms south east of Charlton. I have been an active part of our farm enterprise for many years but officially started work when I left school in 2008.

I write to express the disappointed, anger and frustration of members of our community at the possibility of having 500kv transmissions blighting our environment. The first our family learned of this prospect was through the March 1st article in The Weekly Times.

After reading the article, it seemed reasonable to assume that further information and detail would follow to the residents of the proposed corridor. But nothing was forthcoming until the local VFF called a meeting to highlight the appalling likelihood that these transmission lines may become a reality. There are so many ways these lines would negatively impact on an environment, farming enterprises and community as a whole.

The stealth and lack of information and detail involved in this process is truly unbelievable in our 'so called' democratic society. People and their communities deserve respect, consideration and an informed consultation period regarding the potential building of these obscene structures.

The impact that this will have is HUGE on so many different levels. One of the most significant is related to mental health. Beyond Blue statistics note that male farmers die by suicide significantly higher than general population and non rural farming males. This is going to have a greater impact on rural males mental health, who already deal with drought, flood and unreliable markets and rainfall as they strive to make a living whilst providing essential food and products to trade for our country.

We are concerned by the potential negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on our farming operations and business.

If the transmission infrastructure was to be built on our farmland, I am concerned that I have no information on what land access arrangements could be demanded by the transmission company before, during and after construction; what costs this would have on my business; and what my rights would be.

I am also concerned that there is no information available to me about the compensation that would be provided because of the impacts on my farming operations including reduced production and decreased land values. It is therefore impossible to provide an assessment on the costs to my business if the project was constructed on my land.

Whilst I have not been provided with information that details the impact of transmission infrastructure on our farmland, I believe the following issues will impact our ability to maintain a commercial farming operation now and into the future:

- decreased land value and loss of productive capacity;
- Inability to use tractors and machinery under powerlines;
- inability to utilize emerging technologies such as drones and autonomous vehicles;
- refusal to give notice or inform landholders what chemicals have been used on site causing issues with vendor declarations;
- spread of weeds;
- failure to close gates;
- damage to crops;
- materials left on site causing damage to machinery.

These impacts must be considered when evaluating the true costs and benefits of the proposed project across all agricultural business in the region.

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

Prior to the announcement on 20 February 2023 that the corridor for the VNI West project would change, I had no knowledge of the proposed project and no understanding of it potentially impacting our farm business. I believe the community needs more time to respond to this project so a more accurate assessment of its costs and benefits can be made.

Yours sincerely, Marcus McGurk

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P193

Name: John Batters

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

To the person responsible

DEMOCRACY

Living in a democracy is something we have clearly taken for granted, because not everyone plays by the same rules as we most recently found out.

The Minister for Energy Lily D'AMBROSIO has issued a ministerial order exempting the projects from challenges under the national electricity rules.

VNI West designed a Multi Criteria Analysis to focus on social and environmental impacts, clearly lots of impacts with no accountability to the people it impacts on.

Much has been written about the social personal and emotional impacts this project is going to have on farming families if option 5 were to proceed.

So lets for a moment think about who benifits from option 5. Australia's commitment to reducing carbon emissions is well documented and this project is part of that policy, linking up renewable energy projects to population areas. The question that jumps out at you here is who are those beneficiaries? The answer is simple AUSTRALIANS . So who should pay, again the answer is simple AUSTRALIANS.

Every household pays a service fee for the delivery of roads electricity water etc its a fee that encompasses all the costs to deliver that service ie power lines, you pay for what you receive.

VNI WEST clearly states on its website that option 5 has the lowest REZ Transmission limits 3650 MW compared to option 3A 6490 MW 43.75% less

Option 5 intersects the least with cultural sensitivity areas and the most with agricultural areas yet agriculture ranked second last.

This option has no inclusion for the greater city of Bendigo- this will be addressed in the next 10 year plan at greater cost but how much!!

The nett benefit of option 5 is an enormous 1.388 Billion Dollars yet the land holders receive a miserable 8000 Dollars per kilometre.

I object to this power line outright passing through our land The lack of consultation and compensation on offer is an insult.

John Batters

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P195

Name: Maddison Postle

Location: Woosang, VIC, Australia

Submission

17th April, 2023

To Australian Energy Market Operator,

We are farmers who own land in the proposed Option 5 500Kv double-circuit overhead transmission line corridor. Our land is located in Woosang, Victoria. Our family run 3000 merino sheep and crop 1500 acres per year. We are a family farm with income spread across 3 generations.

You will already receive letters from my family- Alex and Tony, addressing in depth their wide spread, sincere and valid concerns about this project. I echo all of their worries; however, I wish to further on my gravest concern. I gravely fear for the health of our children being exposed to EMF radiation. I am a pregnant mother of soon to be three. Currently, as stated by the WHO, the focus of international research is the investigation of possible links between cancer and electromagnetic fields, at power line and radiofrequencies. This is an 'ongoing' investigation and it cannot yet be ruled out that this does not impact human health. If you are reading this and you have children, please hear my concern. If there is a risk of an increase in childhood cancer, that is a risk worth worrying about. If there is a risk on an increase in depression, that is a risk worth worrying about. If there is a risk of an increase in chronic headaches and chronic anxiety, that is a risk worth worrying about.

I cannot categorically say that these infrastructures will cause cancer, but the fact that EMF exposure is

an ongoing investigation should be reason enough to not continue with this project until it is explicitly proven that it is not harmful to human health, particularly that of children. Many generational farmers live in the same place for their whole life. For our children, that would be a lifetime of potentially dangerous EMF radiation exposure with no say in the matter. With so much 'red tape' in society for human safety, it baffles me that something as reckless as the VNI West Project can jump the red tape with little trouble, when it can not be delivered with guaranteed safety to human health. Why is this?

You can explain to me that there is 'no known risk', but I ask you, would you feel comfortable with one next to your house? Would you still suggest Option 5 if it travelled through your property?

We are so grateful to be raising children in the open space of the country, but the VNI West Project jeopardises their quality of life. We are supporters of clean energy, but this is not a safe option and it does not make sense on many levels. There are other solutions and I urge you to consider safety and sense, over financial gain and tokenism. Do it properly.

Yours sincerely,

Maddison Postle

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P196

Name: Luke Batters

Location: Sutherland, VIC, Australia

Submission

17th April 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I, Luke Batters, am a fourth-generation farmer in the district of Sutherland, Burrumbite, Gooroc and Swanwater districts. Upon learning of the recent proposal of VNI West development shifting to our district, many group and individual discussions have taken place between community landholders. Several of these discussions have taken place in the presence of industry representatives from AEMO, transgrid, and VFF. General consultation and information forthcoming has been less than satisfactory with potential landholders and community members impacted having to go far and above what should be necessary to obtain information relating to VNI West. There are many levels of concern, but I have focused on four areas for my submission.

- NEVA order
- Importance of consultation
- Alternatives for energy
- Public health

NEVA Order

“The Victorian Minister for Energy and Resources has used powers under the National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005 (NEVA) to accelerate the Victoria-New South Wales Interconnector (VNI) West project.”¹ Through this undertaking, there are now several sections of the AEMC energy rules that no longer apply. “The following provisions do not apply in respect of the specified augmentations or any of AEMO’s functions under this Order:

- (a) sections 50F(2), 50F(3) and 50H of the Law;
- (b) rules 5.15A, 5.16, 5.16A and 5.16B of the Rules;
- (c) clauses 8.11.4, 8.11.6, 8.11.7, 8.11.8, 8.11.9 and Schedule 8.11 of the Rules; and
- (d) AEMO’s planning criteria published in accordance with clause 8.11.4 of the Rules.”²

As a result of these changes there is now limited contest-ability into the direction this project will take. These changes remove all forms of democracy allowing government and its constituents to carry out whatever they want.

Importance of consultation

“AVP and Transgrid recognise the vital role that community and landholders have in the planning and delivery of major transmission infrastructure projects, and are dedicated to continuously improving their engagement practices. Transgrid recently conducted a review of the engagement processes used in previous projects to better understand the experience of impacted landholders and communities and determine improvements for future project consultation. AVP has also reflected on recent experience, and points of view from multiple stakeholder perspectives with respect to lessons learned through the ongoing Western Renewables Link community and landholder engagement, and other comparable projects.”

“Energy Charter’s Better Practice Landholder and Community Engagement Guide, developed with the help of landholders and community representatives, to ensure engagement with these stakeholders is respectful and fair.”³

AEMO has acknowledged in multiple publications the importance of considerable engagement. Focus however has been largely directed at the consumer and not the landholder. I find it a slap in the face for the above paragraphs to be written with consultation apparently being “respectful and fair”. Community consultation regarding the VNI west has been either non-existent or has been given inappropriate notification and/or a short window for responses. A recent community engagement held in the town hall of St Arnaud of Tuesday March 21, had several representatives from AEMO and TransGrid present. Representatives vouched that no set route for development had been decided yet, no more than a week later a map surfaces detailing two lines, one for possible renewable expansion the other high voltage power lines through the proposed corridor. It was dumbfounding, given the length this project has apparently been developing that these representatives did not supply appropriate details to community questions asked.

Alternatives for energy

High voltage power lines have been around for many years and have provided the country with a simple means of transferring power from point to point. This however would seem a rather outdated means of solving Australia’s aging energy network. If Australia is to look for alternative solutions to coal it needs to stay up to date with modern forms of power generation. Micro grids and localised power generation using wind, water or solar depending on local conditions would eliminate the need for high power transmission lines running all over the state.

All forms of alternative energy come with their pros and cons, and all have limited lifetime for resources used in the structures used to generate this power, creating problems for disposal of equipment at its life's end. Australia has forty percent of the world's uranium stocks⁴ and although we are reluctant to implement nuclear ourselves, we are quite content to mine and export it for the rest of the world.

"Microbiologists from Radboud University have demonstrated that it is possible to make methane-consuming bacteria generate power in the lab."⁵ High quantities of methane are produced in intensive animal facilities such as housed dairies and feedlots. Methane that is released by animals in pasture-based systems is offset by hydroxyl ions that are released during the action of grazing⁶

. Methane is twenty-eight times⁷ more impacting as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide and means of offsetting its quantity should be given considerably more weight.

The extensive amount forecast for the VNI West project, 3.3 billion dollars, could be spent on localised micro grids and locally positioned alternative sources of energy, as opposed to the distribution itself. This forecast expenditure is hardly reliable given a previous estimate in the ISP in 2018 stood at 1.55 billion dollars. Forecast savings from VNI West are attributed not only before the project is completed but as a result of projects not to be built as tabled in the Project Assessment Draft Report and comprehensively discussed by Ted Woodley in his submission on 9 September 2022.⁸

Public Health

"Several publications in the scientific literature have raised concern about the individual and public health impact of adverse non-ionizing radiation (a-NIR) from electromagnetic field

(EMF) exposure. A review of the scientific literature relating to the link between electromagnetic radiation and human health, several public health recommendations, and four case histories are presented for consideration.” 9

The fact that there has been a clear link between human health and electromagnetic field is shocking, but secondly that this information is nearly impossible to find or portrayed that no evidence exists highlights the monetary greed within the corporate and government industries. Clearly this information is damaging for the viability of a project such a VNI West but should be on every fact sheet for public consideration.

The impact of VNI West if it were to proceed would have far reaching consequences to the St Arnaud community potentially impacted by its proposal. Farming productivity losses, mental instability, physical health and fire safety.

Yours sincerely,

Luke Batters

St Arnaud VIC 3478

1. VNI West transmission project to be fast tracked, February 21, 2023)
2. Victoria Government Gazette S 60 20 February 2023
3. Victoria to New South Wales Interconnector West July 2022 PADR)
4. Parliament of Australia, Review of Uranium Mining Processing and Nuclear Energy in Australia, 6 June 2006
5. Science News “Bacteria generate electricity from methane”, April 12, 2022, Radboud University Nijmegen.
6. Walter Jehne “The Soil Carbon Sponge”.
7. National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting, Greenhouse gases and energy 14 April 2023)
8. Ted Woodley submission on 9 September 2022
9. Fielding a current idea: exploring the public health impact of electromagnetic radiation, Stephen J. Genuis, Faculty of Medicine, University of Alberta, Revised 12 January 2007

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P197

Name: Julie Lang

Location: Bolangum, VIC, Australia

Submission

I have only in the last two weeks become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a power transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The planned route on the map for this proposed transmission line includes farmland that I operate a business on. I am concerned by the detrimental negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on my farming operations, business and family.

We have not had any questions answered and a terrible consultation process where three people out the front of the local town hall, were unable to answer community member questions. A question as simple as how tall the towers are; is pitiful. This is not a proper consultation process and the AEMO should be ashamed that they were conducting a session like this.

The following issues are going to be impacted in our business operations and in the future.

- Mental health concerns – Beyond Blue states that male farmers die by suicide significantly high than those in the general and non-rural farming males
- Decreasing the value of land
- Loss of productivity capacity

o It won't take a week to install these lines. Therefore, sections of important land will be restricted and therefore – less crop, less grazing for sheep – is this to be fenced off and as

whose expense?

- Damage to crops

- Restricted access to land around the transmission lines

 - o Cannot run stock under powerlines

 - o Cannot use machinery under the powerlines

- ☒ Cropping, spraying, spreading, harvesting

- Bio-security concerns

- Farm security

- GPS systems in tractors are affected.

- Damage to farm operating machinery with debris left in area.

- Livestock cannot be run under the transmission lines.

- Cannot fight fires under the powerlines. This is strongly linked with the Black Saturday fires in

Kilmore East where the fires were started by the powerlines. The area that is proposed is all

farmland – the summer months are hot, dry and have a VERY high fire risk without the transmission

lines on them. The CFA is unable to fight the fires near or under these transmission lines – we could

lose acres and acres of land, livestock, homes or worse people's lives.

- When these powerlines are condemned – is this the farmers job to remove them?

I know that option 5 isn't the answer for renewable energy transmission lines the Victorian Government and

AEMO must put the lines underground along existing transport corridors not on highly productive farmland,

which feeds so many people across the country. This will rip communities, families apart and have a great

impact on the statistics regarding male farmers and suicide rates.

As a farming family who works on the land to ensure that our top produce and livestock feed so many

people across the country, this is an insult that companies believe that they can come in and make such

decisions in a terrible 'professional consultation process'.

I strongly suggest that AEMO and Victorian Government rethink this proposal to another area – as they do not know the fight they are about to be up against. These transmission lines are not being erected on my property nor in my shire.

Julie Lang

Bolangum

Northern Grampians Shire

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P199

Name: Stephen Walter

Location: Marnoo, VIC, Australia

Submission

Re: Transmission Infrastructure near Burrum Biodynamics

We have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The corridor for this proposed transmission line is close our business called Burrum Biodynamics. Burrum Biodynamics is a broadacre farming property that is Certified with the Australian Department of Agriculture, National Organic Standard, Australian Demeter Biodynamic.

This strict standard has a number of requirements that need to be met if AEMO were to commence building transmission infrastructure on our property:

- * All vehicles and equipment must be washed down thoroughly before entering the property.
- * NO chemicals are to be used on the property.

The National Organic Standard 1.1 Farm General Principles are to create soils that are high in biological activity, have good crumb structure and humus levels. The impacts of building transmission lines on our soil would impact this general principle. It is hard to predict the level of damage to our organic soil due to lack of information from AEMO. We are also concerned that there is no information available to us about the compensation.

Burrum Biodynamics proudly feeds thousands of Victorians with grains and legumes grown on its farm. We can continue to provide people with quality food if our soil is cared for by us and any other organizations who might enter the farm. We believe that the Victorian Government and AEMO should postpone all transmission line work. Instead, we support the information provided to us by Professor of Electrical Engineering Simon Bartlett AM and Victoria Energy Policy Centre Director Bruce Mountain; the Professors have offered alternatives to AEMO current plans that are not as invasive through the Victorian food bowl.

Regards,

Tania & Stephen Walter

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P200

Name: Gary Gifford

Location: Beazleys Bridge, VIC, Australia

Submission

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a 4th generation farmer, operating a 1000 hectare farm at Beazleys Bridge, Victoria, where I am a primary producer of grain and 1500 head of sheep. I grew up on the farm, and learned the trade from my father and grandfather, and over the last 50 years have worked hard and persevered through droughts, floods, fires and plagues, to grow my farm to the successful operation I have today.

Since we have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales, our community has suffered a great deal of anxiety over the repercussions that this proposal will have on our farms, our families, our lively hoods, and the knock-on effect to our community.

The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes farmland that I operate a business on. I am concerned by the potential negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on my farming operations and business.

If the transmission infrastructure was to be built on my farmland, I am concerned that I have no information on what land access arrangements could be demanded by the transmission company before, during and after construction; what costs this would have on my business; and what my rights would be.

I am also concerned that there is no information available to me about the compensation that would be provided because of the impacts on my farming operations including reduced production and decreased land values. It is therefore impossible to provide an assessment on the costs to my business if the project was constructed on my land.

Whilst I have not been provided with information that details the impact of transmission infrastructure on my farmland, I believe the following issues will impact my ability to maintain a commercial farming operation now and into the future:

- * decreased land value and loss of productive capacity;
- * Inability to use tractors and machinery under powerlines;
- * inability to irrigate under powerlines;
- * inability to utilize emerging technologies such as drones and autonomous vehicles;
- * refusal to give notice or inform landholders what chemicals have been used on site causing issues with vendor declarations;
- * spread of weeds;
- * failure to close gates;
- * damage to crops;
- * materials left on site causing damage to machinery.

These impacts must be considered when evaluating the true costs and benefits of the proposed project across all agricultural business in the region.

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

Prior to the announcement on 20 February 2023 that the corridor for the VNI West project would change, I had no knowledge of the proposed project and no understanding of it potentially impacting my farm business. I believe the community needs more time to respond to this project so a more accurate assessment of its costs and benefits can be made.

Regards,

Gary Gifford

Beazleys Bridge, Victoria.

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P201

Name: Kaye Medlyn

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

I wish to register my strong protest against the proposed Option 5 route for the Vic-NSW Interconnector West project through the extremely productive farmlands of St.Arnaud-Charlton and surrounding districts. Obviously this will massively degrade the area affecting the productive and fine farming practices built up over 6 generations as in my family. These practices include protecting the farming environment from the possible importation to the area of foreign weeds and insects by AEMO employees. The environment here is beautiful, fragile and unique. Fire is an ever present danger. All the small nearby towns, already struggling, would be greatly and adversely effected, economically, reduced property values, difficulty in attracting people to the area, community health and cohesion. In fact too many ways to list here.

The submission on this project by experts in the field, Professor Bruce Mountain and Professor Simon Bartlett, gives the reasons why to go ahead with this Option would be such a mistake. Uneconomical, much more expensive than has been budgeted for, much better means of transmission already existing in Gippsland, not even the best of the 5 Options listed for this Link.

The TOTAL lack of consultation & information adds to the great distress and insult felt by this community. Yes, there was that little table set up outside Weirs Supermarket where bemused shoppers were offered \$20 to fill in a form. Naturally this idea of 'consultation' was treated with the derision it deserved.

Sincerely,

Kaye Medlyn

St. Arnaud, 3478

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P203

Name: Peter Mueller

Location: Barkly, Victoria, Australia

Submission

To whom it may concern: Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO)

Dear Madam/Sir,

I reside with my wife on an approximate 22 acre property located at (WITHHELD) Barkly 3384.

I've become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv doublecircuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales. The corridor for this proposed transmission line potentially includes our property, or may be in its immediate proximity. I'm concerned by the potential negative environmental impacts (ecological and social/aesthetic) that the proposed project will cause.

If the transmission infrastructure was to be built on my land, I'm additionally concerned by the lack of clarity regarding potential impacts – there's a paucity of information available to me regarding compensation that would be provided, including for decreased land values. It's therefore impossible to provide an assessment on the costs to my family if the project was to proceed.

While I haven't been provided with information detailing the impact of transmission infrastructure on my land, I believe the following issues will affect our property:

- ☐ Removal of trees;
- ☐ Decreased land value and loss of productive capacity;
- ☐ Inability to use tractors and machinery under power lines;

☒ Spread of weeds; and

☒ Aesthetic impact to my wife and I as residents, our family and visitors.

These matters must be considered when evaluating the costs and benefits of the proposed project.

Based on information provided in the public meeting regarding the project held in St. Arnaud on 17

April 2023 (which was not attended by any representative of AEMO, or other proponent of the

project), it became apparent through information provided by Prof. Simon Bartlett and Prof. Bruce

Mountain, that the merits of the project, financially, environmentally and socially, are weak. Indeed,

the requirement for a trans-border 'interconnecting' high tension transmission line at any location

given the current move towards more localised PV and wind power supplies in Australia, is

questionable.

It is strongly urged that the review findings on the merit of the project compiled by Prof. Bartlett

and Mountain be considered and alternative power supply and transmission adopted.

Your consideration and response on this matter is of great importance to my family and the

community and I look forward to receiving your response to the matters raised. If you require further

detail on any of my concerns raised, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Peter and Jenny Mueller

Barkly, Vic. 3384

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P204

Name: Barbara Petrie

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

My name is Barbara Petrie and I am 85 years old.

I own land in Sutherland St.Arnaud and my family have farmed here since first farming settlement in Victoria

My farm is currently leased to my neighbours who are the current caretakers of the land.

The construction of electrical towers and lines on my property will both degrade and devalue the land on which they are placed and also severely impact my tenants ability to crop and run livestock on the land.

My descendants will be forever impacted by the project by devalued land values, inherent risks involved with incumbent infrastructure, and the unsightly impact of towers on the land.

I say no to proposed option 5 for the Victorian NSW Interconnector.

Regards

Barbara Petrie

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P205

Name: Janet Mathes

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

I have recently been made aware of the proposed construction of transmission towers on farmland in the St. Arnaud area.

My family have been farming in the Sutherland/Swanwater area for multiple generations with our neighbours currently leasing our family property.

The proposed construction of these towers will not only devalue and degrade pristine farmland that has been cared for by generations of my family but impact the current tenants and future generations in their ability to both crop and run livestock on the farm.

There has been no consultative process and this project will have an ongoing impact on any future generations who will live in the area. Towers are unsightly, noisy and have long reaching mental health impacts on those who visualise them.

Please do not destroy land that has been part of the Victorian food bowl for generations and more to come.

I strongly advocate no the the option 5 proposal for the interconnection.

Regards

Janet Mathes

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P206

Name: Tom Small

Location: Navarre, VIC, Australia

Submission

To Whom it May concern,

My name is Tom Small and I along with my family operate a farm in the proposed VNI West corridor. The property is a mixed sheep and cropping enterprise of 1850ha between Navarre and St Arnaud and potentially 7-8 kms of power line along it's route.

I first became aware of the route at a meeting convened by the VFF. There certainly hadn't been any attempt to contact us by relevant agencies. To date information on this project has been scant and less than forthcoming and we are still left wondering what our future holds.

As well as the lack of information on the power line its self, I also have no clarity on the compensation for effected land holders within this area.

Whilst it is hard to truly know the effects on our operation with such little information my concerns are as follows;

Major decrease in land value. Our historic property sits in a picturesque valley, industrial pylon would obliterated the sale-ability and value of our farm.

Loss of trees and biodiversity. 150,000 trees have been planted in plantations and corridor over the last 20 years. The irony of theses being removed in the name of being "green" blows my mind!

Inability to use larger machinery under power lines
Inability to fight fires within the easement
Inability to use areal spraying and spreading as well as drones
Machinery not respecting our biosecurity, in particular the spread of Ovine Johnes disease on mud on vehicle tyres.

Loss of grazing area under the pylons

Liability for damage of this infrastructure

It makes me SO sad that these developments, including wind farms, divide and destroy communities, without exception, everywhere they go.

To be perfectly candid, I feel as though this letter will get logged, ignored and never seen again, like some episode of "Utopia". But truly, you now cant drive out of sight of turbines from Melbourne to the SA border, picturesque countryside lost for ever, when is enough enough. I think Western Victoria has done more than its fair share of the heavy lifting, how about Melbourne and Sydney make some compromises for once!

I want to make it absolutly clear, I will be standing alongside my neighbors, making this as difficult as possible for those who want to destroy our landscape. No access, no cooperation. I stand proud of my environmental works, my carbon footprint and my custody of the land, and will not stand by and let multi national's profits and political point scoring ruin that.

I am always available to discuss any of this.

Sincerely Tom Small

Tom Small

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P207

Name: Marj Caulfield

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

As a family member of a farming family near St Arnaud it is devastating to learn of the plans for these high voltage transmission lines to impact on the farming community. These impacts will spread to the entire community. I have very grave fears for the well-being of those who will bear the brunt of this appalling decision. On hearing from those who know this is a very flawed plan has made it more heartbreaking.

I hope and trust your will seriously consider the outcome of this project.

Regards

Marj Caulfield.

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P208

Name: Erin McGurk

Location: Bendigo, VIC, Australia

Submission

To Whom It May Concern,

As the daughter of a 5th generation farmer I am devastated to hear of the proposed plans to build transmission towers through the family farm. Further to this, the lack of consultation and very brief timeline in which the community has been offered to 'discuss' and 'ask questions' is nothing short of a disgrace. It is very clear to me that the push to get these towers erected is one of a political nature, with absolutely no care and consideration given to the impact it will have to the landholders, local community or the land itself.

We (and I will say we, as despite now being located with my own children in Bendigo, the farm is very much my home) have lived on, and worked this land for hundreds of years, and to think that someone can just come in and destroy everything my family has worked so hard to achieve, is gut-wrenching.

For me, the farm is a sacred place. Pure and peaceful, with the landscape remaining relatively unchanged over the years. The connection I have to the land is both spiritual and sentimental, as it is the original block that my Irish ancestors came out and selected many moons ago. Since then my family have nurtured and developed the land, turning it into the viable farm that it is today. They have endured many a hardship in recent years – severe drought back when I was growing up, devastating floods and now the potential of electrical towers that will not only take away from the beauty of the farm exterior, but will also have many implications on it's earning capacity. And it's just not fair.

Not only will you be depriving my family of their annual income in the loss of their ability to farm underneath these towers and powerlines, but your towers will also depreciate the overall value of the land significantly. The figure being offered as compensation is an insult. 200K over 25 years does not come anywhere close to the income loss, nor does it factor in the loss in value of the property as a whole. Whoever did the sums on what the landholders truly deserve if this project is to go ahead needs to go back to the drawing board.

Speaking of going back to the drawing board, it is very obvious to me that the idea needs to be re-worked. From what I understand, there are alternatives. And potential to use pre-existing lines to achieve the same outcome. Or perhaps go underground instead? Maybe before shutting down all of pre-existing energy sources, you should

have put more of your time, energy and resources into coming up with a VIABLE solution? I am all for minimising our environmental footprint – which has funnily enough been inspired by my time spent living on the land – but surely there has to be an alternative?

At the end of the day Landholders should have the right to say no. In what other instance would you be able to just walk into somebody else's backyard or home and set about making it your own? It's just not right – and your Government knows it. As mentioned in the opening paragraph, the consultation process has been an absolute joke, and pretty much non-existent. Again, this adds to the hurt and anger we are all feeling. We are being bullied into submission, and it's not ok.

I sincerely hope that you listen to the feedback that you have received and re-consider this project in it's entirety. There will be a solution – but whacking up big, ugly, unsafe transmission towers across our pristine farming land is not it.

Yours Sincerely,

Erin McGurk

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P209

Name: Nathan Lidgett

Location: Myrniong, VIC, Australia

Submission

17th April 2023

Mr Nathan Lidgett

Woodlands Agriculture

Forward

As a landowner in the 2020 & 2021 proposed route for the WRL, and the subsequent enacting the NEVA legislation, whereupon the WRL and VNI-West project are coupled together, I would expect that this submission be included in the extended response period.

VNI-W and WRL Stakeholder Feedback

I am writing to express my concerns re the proposed Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) 'approved', but ferociously opposed WRL C2 option and the 'Plucked Out of Thin Air' Option 5 VNI-West proposed routes throughout Western Victoria.

There is no disagreement that there is a requirement for an upgrade in the energy infrastructure and storage networks throughout Victoria, especially, with the Andrews State Labor Government now striving for an unachievable renewable energy target by 2030.

My concerns begin with the AEMO itself. This is a so-called independent 'not for profit' organisation and membership consists of Commonwealth & State Governments (60%) and the energy industry companies (40%), with operating costs recovered through fees paid by the market participants. This composition and governance raise many warning bells when instigating and processing complex and 'beneficial' industry outcomes, as seen with the Western Victoria.

Moreover, please explain why we are undertaking this process now, as the Victorian Minister for Energy, Lily D'Ambrosio, enacted the NEVA legislation that enables her office to override the National Energy Rules, and

override the ability to question the RIT-T process and its highly contentious costing models. Whereupon a pending legal challenge re the modelling presented by AEMO re WRL RIT-T was successful overridden by this legislation.

The question needs to be publicly answered, if this AEMO process has any public accountability and the costings are true, realistic, peer group scrutinised AND are undertaken for the best interests of the public, and not just for the best interests and the gold plating profits of the members of AEMO –

AEMO INDUSTRY MEMBERS as 10 July 2020

<https://aemo.com.au/en/about/our-people/our-members><<https://aemo.com.au/en/about/our-people/our-members>>

Advanced Energy Resources

AETV Pty Ltd

AER Retail Pty Ltd

A-Star Electricity Ptd Ltd

AGL Energy Ltd

AGL Loy Yang Marketing Pty Ltd

AGL Macquarie Agora Retail Pty Ltd

Allgas Energy Pty Ltd

APA EE Holdings Pty Ltd

APA GasNet Australia (Operations) Pty Ltd

Alinta Sales Pty Ltd

Alinta Energy Retail Sales Pty Ltd

Amalgamated Energy Services P/L

Amanda Energy PL APT Facility Management Pty Ltd

APT Petroleum Pipelines Pty Ltd APT Pipelines (NSW) Pty Ltd

Ararat Wind Farm Pty Ltd

Attunga Capital Pty Ltd

Aurora Energy Pty Ltd

Australian Gas Networks Limited Australian Pipeline Trust

Aus Gas Trading Pty Ltd

Ausgrid Bluewaters Power 1 Pty Ltd

Bluewaters Power 2 Pty Ltd

Central Ranges Pipeline Pty Ltd

CitiPower Pty Ltd

Clean Energy Transfer Fund Investments Pty Ltd as trustee for Clean Energy Transfer Fund Trust

Click Energy Pty Ltd

Collgar Wind Farm Pty Ltd

Covau Pty Ltd

Delburn Wind Farm Pty Ltd

Delta Electricity Denmark Community Windfarm Ltd

Diamond Energy Pty Ltd

Directlink Joint Venture (ABN 16 779 340 889) (Directlink (No. 1) Pty Limited ABN 85 085 123 468, Directlink (No. 2) Pty Limited ABN 87 095 439 222, and Directlink (No. 3) Pty Limited ABN 86 095 449 817 trading as Directlink Joint Venture)

Dodo Power & Gas Pty Ltd

East Australian Pipeline Pty Ltd

EDL Group Operations Pty Ltd

ElectrAg Pty Ltd

ElectraNet Pty Ltd

Endeavour Energy

Energex Limited

EnergyAustralia Gas Storage Pty Ltd

EnergyAustralia Pty Ltd

EnergyAustralia Yallourn Pty Ltd Energy Pacific (Vic) Pty Ltd

EnerNOC Pty Ltd

Enova Energy Pty Ltd

Epic Energy South Australia Pty Ltd

ERM Power Ltd ERM Power Retail Pty Ltd ESCO Pacific Pty Ltd

Essential Energy Flinders Operating Services Pty Ltd FPC 30 Ltd

GSP Energy Pty Ltd

Hydro-Electric Corporation Hydro Power Pty Ltd

ICAP Australia Pty Ltd

Infigen Energy Markets Pty Ltd

Infratil Energy Australia Pty Ltd

Jemena Ltd

Kiamal Solar Farm Pty Ltd

LMS Energy Pty Ltd

Marubeni Australia Power Services Pty Ltd

Millmerran Energy Trader Pty Ltd

Transmission Company Pty Ltd MTA Energy Pty Ltd

Newcrest Mining Limited

NewGen Power Kwinana Pty Ltd

New Gullen Range Wind Farm Pty Ltd

N. P. Power Pty Ltd

OneSteel Manufacturing Pty Ltd

Onsite Energy Solutions Pty Ltd

Origin Energy Electricity Ltd

Origin Energy

Eraring Overland Sun Farming Company Pty Ltd

Oxley Solar Development Pty Ltd

Pacific Hydro

Challicum Hills Pty Ltd

Pacific Hydro Clements Gap Pty Ltd

Pacific Hydro Portland Wind Farm Pty Ltd

Pacific Hydro Retail Pty Ltd

Perth Energy

Phoenix Energy Australia Pty Ltd

Pooled Energy Pty Ltd

Powercor Australia Pty Ltd

Queensland Electricity Transmission Corporation Limited (trading as Powerlink Queensland)

Reach Solar Energy Management Co Pty Ltd RE

Oakey Pty Ltd Santos Ltd

Simcoa Operations Pty Ltd

SIMEC ZEN Energy Retail Pty Ltd

Solar Reserve Australia II Pty Ltd

South East Australia Gas Pty Ltd

Snowtown Wind Farm Pty Ltd

Snowtown Wind Farm Stage 2 Pty Ltd

Snowy Hydro Pty Ltd

SPI Electricity Pty Ltd

Strategic Gas Market Trading Pty Ltd

Tasmanian Gas Pipeline Pty Ltd

TasNetworks Pty Ltd

Vellocet Clean Energy Pty Ltd

TransGrid

Yarranlea Solar Pty Ltd

Vicpower Trading (State Electricity Commission of Victoria trading as Vicpower Trading)

Water Corporation

Wesfarmers

Kleenheat Gas Pty Ltd

Western Downs Solar Project Pty Ltd

Westpac Banking Corporation

WINconnect Pty Ltd

AEMO Government Members as at 1 January 2016

https://aemo.com.au/-/media/files/about_aemo/board_and_governance/aemo-government-members.pdf?la=en<https://aemo.com.au/-/media/files/about_aemo/board_and_governance/aemo-government-members.pdf?la=en>

Commonwealth Government

Australian Capital Territory

State of New South Wales

State of Queensland

State of South Australia

State of Tasmania

State of Victoria

State of Western Australia

The AEMO, AusNet, TransGrid and the Energy Industry itself, understands the only requirements they are mandated to meet, to get their preferred options through the countryside, is the planning parameters of the environment and indigenous significances in State and Federal Planning Legislation. However in saying that, if DEWLP suggests to fail an EES, the incumbent Planning Minister can override DEWLP recommendations and 'rubber stand' these projects without any rhyme nor reason (political prerogative).

Many submissions to the AEMO noted that the Regulatory Investment Test – Transmission (RIT-T) for the Western Victoria Transmission Network Project (now WRL) neglected to include 'Social License', Land use planning, non-statutory planning, and cultural, economic and environmental factors, and still this is severely lacking in the VNI-West.

The Loddon Mallee New Energy Taskforce (LM-NET) Response to the AEMO's Project Draft Report (PADR) – 28 February 2019 – John McLinden

"The Victorian Government and most Councils also have strong policies to put communities at the centre of decision making. By landing on a preferred option before working with communities on non-economic considerations of community acceptance and support as well as land use planning issues is not current best practice"

Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance – Western Victorian Renewable Integration – PADR submission – 27 February 2019 – Rob Law

"at the moment the RIT-T is the main mechanism for actioning transmission upgrades. We think there is an urgent need to integrate other planning processes with the RIT-T process so that considerations of preferred options can be cognisant of broader planning considerations, particularly social and environmental.

Notwithstanding all of the above, agriculture, fire concerns, Biosecurity and the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 appear to be insignificant to the AEMO's approval process transecting our homes, farm and bushlands.

The integrity of Australia's clean green agricultural produce is not even considered. The richness of soils and the pristine shallow aquifers supplying our communities, animals and irrigators. The rolling hills and protective grazing and cropping country on alluvial and volcanic soils, not even consider.

Another significant question that also needs to be considered, is what is the net loss to landowners, small businesses, agricultural productivity, tourism, state and regional planning, rate revenue, social destruction, environmental destruction, cultural destruction? I would strongly suggest if the present WRL and VNI-West options are realized that the net loss will greatly out strip the net gain of these projects. Notwithstanding, the ambiguity in the costing models, hidden throughout the myriad of over technical jargon used to confuse 99.93% of the population, in an act of clap-trap transparency.

Green field transmission networks require the obtainment of easements and the destruction of the environment in order to move the energy. In so doing, many businesses, agricultural lands, forest systems, tourism precincts, and people's homes and livelihoods are severely destroyed. The impacts are not limited to a depreciation of land value, they encompass the inability to continue running business operations, the impediment of restrictions in place along easements, the destruction of longer-term business plans, the destruction of communities – social, mentally, and historically, just to name a few.

Presently, the Renewable energy system is creating economic benefits for the energy industries, and a political platform for government and ministers to spruik about so-called "green energy".

The other beneficiary of the Renewable energy system is supposedly the consumer. The consumer is said to be receiving greener energy at cheaper prices. Whilst this is unequivocally questionable, no government state or federal, wish to see higher energy prices, as this is not conducive to retaining power.

However, the communities along the transmission network supporting the movement of energy are left with the 'turd' sandwich. These communities did not put their hand in the air, screaming to host the outdated ugly steel lattice towers. This 'Turd Sandwich' is being thrust upon communities and landscapes with unsurprising resistance.

The landowners along these paths: -

- * Have easements, with regulations of use, forced upon them.
- * OH&S risk massively increased for family, friends and workers
- * Devaluation of property prices.
- * Elevated Biosecurity risks
- * Have property terrain altered
- * Future business plans impeded
- * Ecotourism opportunities extinguished
- * Disturbance to business operations, prior to, during, and post construction

* Have their communities torn apart – due to the dominant locations in rural setting, generational business operators leave the industry or absentee operate businesses, causing the demise of rural communities – as significantly seen in the wind generation zones.

* Also, having communities torn apart – by the divide and conquer tactical methods employed by the proponents and their contractors

* Adjoining landowners, who do not get transmission easements, have their property and business effected without compensation.

* Have generational land and environmental development destroyed.

* Have no financial support to question the development, legitimacy and/or its location

All this, when pre-existing easements and undergrounding are continually ignored, by the so-called AEMO experts with golden watches.

AEMO total arrogance and ignorance of other industry bodies riles rural communities when logical systems are ignored or not even considered. As seen by the total disregard of AusNet's and other industry bodies, comments re VNI-West dates 03/03/2020

INTERCONNECTION INTO WESTERN VICTORIAN TRANSMISSION NETWORK

AEMO – 2020 Draft Integrated System Plan Consultation: Published 03/03/2020

AusNet Services, is the transmission network service provider for Victoria 1. , and has seriously questioned the road map for the VNI West (Victoria to NSW Interconnector).

'The draft ISP currently considers two options for the VNI West and indicates that the optimal route will be assessed during the consultation period. AusNet Services is concerned that the best solution may be one that is not currently being considered, and full consideration of options will not be possible in the timeframe remaining to complete the 2020 ISP.

AusNet Services has investigated several alternative options, including the more central option shown in the diagram below.

[cid:image001.png@01D972B0.C5061120]

Compared to the Draft ISP options this alternative:

* Is shorter in route length

* Significantly lower in cost due to length and fewer terminal station connections,

- * Introduces lower electrical losses,
- * Could deliver more quickly due to fewer outage constraints and availability of existing land and easements that form part of AusNet Services strategic landholdings
- * Provide other benefits including:
 - * Improved security of supply to Melbourne by avoiding the creation of a supercritical generation flow path between Ballarat and Sydenham
 - * Enable the newly identified V6 REZ in central Victoria
 - * Alleviate risk to supply as a result of bushfires through route diversity
 - * Allows for future spurs to be constructed to enable further generation in V2 REZ' 1.

This option is also supported by Snowy Hydro Ltd, as per their AEMO submission to the Western Victoria Renewable Integration – RIT-T Project Assessment Draft Report Submission, dated 27 February 2019.

‘There are a number of reasons why a route diverse northeast corridor path from Murray to Dederang to South Morang path upgrade would achieve a significant increment in VIC import capability and is a credible option for increased interconnection between Vic and NSW if linked to Option 2a/3a and the future Snowy to Wagga to Bannaby line sections.

There are number of reasons why a route diverse northeast corridor from Murray to Dederang to South Morang (or another metro north 500kV yard) is a credible and efficient option:

- * Known Upgrade – upgrade of the northeast corridor (Murray to Dederang and Dederang to South Morang) has been included in the AEMO Victoria Annual planning Report (VAPR) for over ten years;
- * Lower cost – The northeast corridor is the shortest geographical route between NSW and the VIC 500kV backbone;
- * Preferred Electrical Path – The series compensated Dederang to South Morang lines reduce the effective “electrical” distance between Melbourne and the Murray switching station to approximately 230km, meaning power flow from NSW to VIC will always favour this flow via the alternate (longer) western options (unless they are significantly overbuilt to sufficiently reduce impedance);
- * Less complexity – Alternately for the western option power flow control devices may be required to “force” power to flow via these longer route options. However using the northeast corridor avoids this requirement as it is already the shortest electrical route between NSW and VIC;’ 2.

In understanding that Victoria's major Transmission Network provider, AusNet, and the large hydro energy supplier, Snowy Hydro, are seriously questioning the logic in joining the Snowy Hydro energy system into the WRL, then you have to seriously question the logic of the construction of a potentially underutilized and over capitalized double circuit 500kV line from Bulgana to Sydenham.

In an ever-changing Renewable energy sector, and the true possibility that the Snowy and the Red Cliff Transmission lines converge and traverse to South Morang, allowing for expansion from V2 and V6 REZ, hence not connecting into the WRL, and a seriously underutilized customer funded Western Victoria Transmission Network. The State governments and 'AEMO are engaged in a high stakes process that seeks to balance the risks of not acting quickly enough to enable a smooth transition of the energy market and acting too quickly or taking actions that may prove unnecessary where consumers may be forced to pay for underutilized or stranded assets'.³.

Why oh why have the AEMO been hiding behind their big, polished desks and undeserving bonuses, yet seldom crease their new RM Williams, to understand the economic and destructive nature of these illogically proposed VNI-West and WRL proposed projects. It must be remembered that these are a CONSUMER pays projects, and as a consumer these projects makes not logical sense. As a consumer of energy, these projects are flawed, in their point-to-point plan, shortest route, cheapest construction cost policy. The constantly changing energy market demands smart thinking, and conceptualized thinking, neither of which are displayed here. Technology is not just straight lines on a map, it is plug and play, share the load, minimize and spread risk, but to be done in a socially, environmentally, culturally, agriculturally and economical sensitive manner and safely undergrounded.

The AEMO – Integrated System Plan - July 2018 – for the National Electricity Market, states “the reliability and security of the power system is an imperative, and all scenarios have been modelled in a manner which ensures standards are met. AEMO has also considered a number of risks to the system and sought to ensure a level of resilience. In particular, the exposure to climate risk and especially to extreme weather events and bushfires has been considered”. REALLY, where and how?

Obviously, a low level of resilience is being sought, as the risk of my freckle being burnt will exponentially increase if these projects proceed.

I must apologize for my cynicism, but the AEMO (yes the federal and state governments and energy industry heavy weights), are paying mere lip service to the Victorian energy consumers. The governmental prerogative appears only to achieve their emission reduction targets at whatever environmental, community, social, agricultural, OH&S and economical cost.

Yes, we achieved our emission targets, but sorry we 'buggered' the rest of the environment along the way. Got cheap, cross subsidized power, but sorry got nothing to eat, as all the good agricultural land sit under a complex array of criss-cross circuit boards and our tourism industry is decimated. Yet the Energy Fat Cats got Very Very Fat.

As the rural communities have an uninsurable OH&S risk whereupon they cannot guarantee families the safe return of their hard toiling loved ones. Fire, Flashover, EMF, Electrocutation, Mental Stress.

Once again, we will be offered some special and comforting words – “WE HEAR YOU”, whether it be from an Ombudsman, AEIC, a Minister, TransGrid, AusNet, AEMO or a mental health professional.

We have been hearing those three words for three years now!

However the Western Victorian Communities and Landowners have only two word in response, and these two words have remained resilient for three years too, and will outlast sitting governments, AusNet, TransGrid and AEMO.

ACCESS DENIED!

The solution is very simple, and I do understand there is a requirement to employ as many people as possible to draw a straight line on a map with no local knowledge, but there are pre-existing brownfield easements right throughout Victoria- transport, gas, rail, road, telecommunication, power.

The implementation of some 21st century common sense, coupled with Environmental and Social Corporate Responsibility is essential. If the VNI-W and WRL are to transport renewable energy efficiently, then this need to be achieved in the least environmental destructive ‘green’ manner possible

Although we are yet to understand AEMO & Lily D’Ambrosio’s objectives, but presently AEMO, Victorian & NSW State Labor Governments, TransGrid & AusNet are looking at to leave a trail of economic, environment, agricultural, business and social destruction in its wake.

This Western Victorian Rural Community and I strongly encourage that these projects should be undertaken underneath pre-existing brownfield corridors and undergrounded ...a 21st century solution for a 21st century green energy problem.

Until then, two words will remain constant – Access Denied!

Yours faithfully,

Nathan Lidgett

Western Victorian Community Member

Myrniong – Korobeit – Greendale

Agricultural Business Owner

17/04/2023

1. AEMO – 2020 Draft Integrated System Plan Consultation – AusNet Services - https://www.aemo.com.au/-/media/files/stakeholder_consultation/consultations/nem-consultations/2020/draft-2020-isp/submissions/ausnet-services-submission-draft-2020-isp.pdf?la=en<https://www.aemo.com.au/-/media/files/stakeholder_consultation/consultations/nem-consultations/2020/draft-2020-isp/submissions/ausnet-services-submission-draft-2020-isp.pdf?la=en>

1. Project Assessment Draft Report (PADR) Submissions – Snowy Hydro Ltd Submission to the PADR at <https://aemo.com.au/initiatives/major-programs/western-victorian-regulatory-investment-test-for-transmission/stakeholder-consultation><<https://aemo.com.au/initiatives/major-programs/western-victorian-regulatory-investment-test-for-transmission/stakeholder-consultation>>

1. AEMO – 2020 Draft Integrated System Plan Consultation – Energy Users Association Australia – https://www.aemo.com.au/-/media/files/stakeholder_consultation/consultations/nem-consultations/2020/draft-2020-isp/submissions/energy-users-association-of-australia-submission-to-draft-2020-isp.pdf?la=en<https://www.aemo.com.au/-/media/files/stakeholder_consultation/consultations/nem-consultations/2020/draft-2020-isp/submissions/energy-users-association-of-australia-submission-to-draft-2020-isp.pdf?la=en>

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P210

Name: Mary McCormick

Location: Rochester, VIC, Australia

Submission

Submission to VNI West

In 1875 my great grandfather Joseph Goode and his wife Honora (nee Hackett) took up an original selection of 160 acres at Sutherland. Further descendants have continued this fine tradition through to the present.

That original selection has grown to around seven thousand acres of which the family owns 4000 acres. Part of that ownership is my parcel of land which I lease to my brother Denis and his son Simon to farm.

I object to the massive steel towers which you intend to dump on our family land. I believe they will devalue the land and other land surrounding them. I want to ensure that my land stays in good condition for future generations. I do not agree to any structures being placed on my land which will cause a disruption to the present family business.

Regards

Mary McCormick (nee Goode)

Rochester Vic 3561

I have become aware of the Victorian Government and AEMO's proposal to construct a 500kv double-circuit overhead transmission line from Bulgana to New South Wales.

The corridor for this proposed transmission line includes farmland that I operate a business on. I am concerned by the potential negative impacts that transmission infrastructure will have on my farming operations and business.

If the transmission infrastructure was to be built on my farmland, I am concerned that I have no information on what land access arrangements could be demanded by the transmission company before, during and after construction; what costs this would have on my business; and what my rights would be.

I am also concerned that there is no information available to me about the compensation that would be provided because of the impacts on my farming operations including reduced production and decreased land values. It is therefore impossible to provide an assessment on the costs to my business if the project was constructed on my land.

Whilst I have not been provided with information that details the impact of transmission infrastructure on my farmland, I believe the following issues will impact my ability to maintain a commercial farming operation now and into the future:

- decreased land value and loss of productive capacity;
- Inability to use tractors and machinery under powerlines;
- inability to irrigate under powerlines;
- inability to utilize emerging technologies such as drones and autonomous vehicles;
- refusal to give notice or inform landholders what chemicals have been used on site causing issues with vendor declarations;
- spread of weeds;
- failure to close gates;
- damage to crops;
- materials left on site causing damage to machinery.

These impacts must be considered when evaluating the true costs and benefits of the proposed project across all agricultural business in the region.

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

Prior to the announcement on 20 February 2023 that the corridor for the VNI West project would change, I had no knowledge of the proposed project and no understanding of it potentially impacting my farm business. I believe the community needs more time to respond to this project so a more accurate assessment of its costs and benefits can be made.

NAME Mary McCormick

LOCATION Rochester

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P211

Name: Noreen Baxter

Location: Invermay, VIC, Australia

Submission

Submission to VNI West

In 1875 my great grandfather Joseph Goode and his wife Honora (nee Hackett) took up an original selection of 160 acres at Sutherland. Further descendants have continued this fine tradition through to the present.

That original selection has grown to around seven thousand acres of which the family owns 4000 acres. Part of that ownership is my parcel of land which I lease to my brother Denis and his son Simon to farm.

I object to the massive steel towers which you intend to dump on our family land. I believe they will devalue the land and other land surrounding them. I do not agree to any structures being placed on my land which will cause a disruption to the present family business.

Regards Noreen Baxter (nee Goode)

Invermay Vic 3350

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P212

Name: Patricia Goode

Location: St Arnaud, VIC, Australia

Submission

Submission to VNI West

In 1875 my husband's great grandfather Joseph Goode and his wife Honora (nee Hackett) took up an original selection of 160 acres at Sutherland. Further descendants have continued this fine tradition through to the present.

My husband Denis and I have farmed land at Sutherland and Gooroc since we were married in 1978. Now our son Simon and his wife Naomi are currently working the land with us. They have three young sons who love living on the farm and watching the passing of the seasons and the variety of work that goes with each one.

Over the years we have used the best farming practices to preserve the structure of the soil and have kept up with the advance in technology that is required of modern day farming.

These huge ugly structures you are planning to build over our land are an imposition on our farming business and a blight on the landscape which will affect generations to come.

I strongly protest about the installation of transmission lines between Bulgana and Kerang.

Regards

Patricia Goode

St Arnaud Vic 3478

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P213

Name: Shane Field

Location: Wallaloo East, VIC, Australia

Submission

Thank you for taking the time to read about how your proposal of overhead powerlines on our farming land will impact our lives and community hugely. It is with much disappointment that we were not consulted in the planning of a major project that immediately affects our family. The proposal and limitations that these enormous powerlines will cause, to our 5th generation farming family and surrounding community, are unrealistic and unnecessary. Our ability to have full access to the farming land that we own, cultivate, spray and tend to in regards to all other aspects of farming, will be significantly disrupted. Please acknowledge our objection to this project with the respect our family deserves. We would appreciate that you consider all other alternatives.

Kind Regards

Shane Field

Wallaloo East

Individual submission



VNI West – Additional Consultation Report

SUBMISSION NUMBER: P214

Name: Kate Field

Location: Wallaloo East, VIC, Australia

Submission

Thank you for taking the time to read about how your proposal of overhead powerlines on our farming land will impact our lives and community hugely. It is with much disappointment that we were not consulted in the planning of a major project that immediately affects our family. The proposal and limitations that these enormous powerlines will cause, to our 5th generation farming family and surrounding community, are unrealistic and unnecessary. Our ability to have full access to the farming land that we own, cultivate, spray and tend to in regards to all other aspects of farming, will be significantly disrupted. Please acknowledge our objection to this project with the respect our family deserves. We would appreciate that you consider all other alternatives.

Regards,

Kate Field

Wallaloo East