

Media Release



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Misleading tactics used by transmission companies to dupe farmers

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) has expressed concerns about misleading information being provided to farmers who may be impacted by the proposed VNI-West transmission project.

VFF President Emma Germano said the Australian Energy Market Operator (which is planning the project on behalf of the Victorian Government) had released information to landholders designed to pressure them into signing away access to their land.

“The tactics used by AEMO to try and coerce farmers into signing away their rights is shameful and is yet another example of the way they have acted in bad faith with farming communities.”

“If the Victorian Government continues to allow for this sought of behaviour from AEMO, farmers won’t cooperate and there is no way that Victoria will be able to meet its renewable energy targets and keep the lights on.”

Ms Germano said AEMO had published statements in its Landholder Guide suggesting that it may use powers under legislation to force entry onto farms to undertake surveying.

Under section 93 of Victoria’s *Electricity Industry Act 2000*, transmission companies may force entry onto land to undertake surveys where they have been licenced by the Essential Services Commission.

“The shell company AEMO has created to undertake this work called Transmission Company Victorian (TCV) does not have the power to force entry onto farmland at this time.”

“AEMO and TCV have not been issued a licence by the ESC, and therefore have no ability force entry onto farms.”

Ms Germano said the issue had been compounded by landholders being offered \$10,000 payments to enter into a Land Access Agreement with AEMO over two years.

“It is unconscionable that AEMO would be offering a \$10,000 inducement for farmers to give up access to their land, otherwise they’ll use legal powers to force entry, when they do not have that power.”

The VFF understands that the ESC has contacted AEMO to advise them that the information they have provided is misleading and has requested that their materials be re-written.

“Had AEMO and the Victorian Government engaged with farmers and communities in good faith from the start, we would not be seeing the widespread opposition to the proposed project.”

“Farmers won’t let authorities run over the top of their rights and the Victorian Government has a responsibility to ensure that farmers are not taken advantage of,” Ms Germano said.

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