

Media Release



Victorian
Farmers
Federation

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Goschen sand mine development highlights broken EES process

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) says farming communities are being prevented from participating in the process for assessing the environmental risk of mining and energy projects leading to bad outcomes for food production.

VFF President Emma Germano said concerns raised by farmers impacted by the Goschen Mineral Sands and Rare Earths Project near Swan Hill about public exposure of its Environmental Effects Statement (EES) occurring during the summer harvest exposed floors in the system.

“Ultimately, not allowing the community to fully participate in the scrutiny of projects leads to unforeseen and poorer outcomes.”

“Farmers feel they are being steamrolled in this process. It is important that the government takes a slow and precautionary approach to mining development to ensure food and fibre production is not jeopardized.”

Ms Germano has written to Victoria’s Planning Minister Sonya Kilkenny requesting an extension to the public exhibition of the EES for the project.

“Running public consultation in a farming district over the harvest season is tone-deaf and arrogant. The standard 30-day consultation periods that government use is a joke and the additional 10 days that was given in this instance is not meaningful in any way.”

Ms Germano said farming communities need to be better empowered to participate in the EES process for mining and energy projects.

“The VFF has long argued the EES process in Victoria must be reformed to better allow impacted communities to identify and understand the risks of projects on the environment, food production and human health.”

“These processes often require scientific and technical expertise which the community does not have. The Victorian Government had previously undertaken a pilot program that gave support to community groups impacted by mining proposals so they could be supported through the EES process.”

“The VFF has suggested that this type of program be built into the EES process, especially for projects where the government can grant access to private land without landholder consent.”

“The way EES processes are carried out not only matters in the case of mining developments, but also the rollout of renewable energy and transmission infrastructure across the state.”

“We are actively raising awareness of these issues across the government so we can help reform the system,” Ms Germano said.

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