

Media Release



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Renewables fast-track steam rolls farmers

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) says the Victorian Government's fast-tracking of renewable energy projects by accelerating planning approvals is a slap in the face after years of sham consultation with farming communities.

VFF President Emma Germano said the green-lighting of major renewable projects adds to a poor-track record of consulting landholders set to be impacted and risks further alienating already frustrated farmers across Victoria.

"The Victorian Government has decided to steam roll Victorian farmers and regional communities, with little regard to how it impacts their livelihoods and countless generational family farms."

"We've heard that vast parts of Victoria's farmland will be needed to reach our renewable energy targets. If we can't get this right now, our ability to produce the food and fibre needed to feed people will be severely inhibited."

"For the government to say they are genuinely listening to the concerns of these communities and then completely ignore them and fast-track the process smacks of arrogance and them being completely tone-deaf."

"For years the VFF has been pleading with the government to introduce a fair framework that guides the transition to our renewable energy future. Not only have they failed to do this, they've now hit the accelerator and it's farmers and our regional communities that are set to pay the price."

"We've already seen farmers take to the streets of Melbourne in pure desperation as a last resort to have their voices heard. Decisions like this one leave us shaking our heads," Ms Germano said

Ms Germano added the VFF is not against the transition to a renewable energy future, rather taking aim at the complete failure of the government to plan accordingly and as a result making farmers and regional communities the scape-goat in the process.

"Renewable energy has lost social license and the system is broken. This move is a serious regulatory and planning failure. There remains a lack of any regulatory safeguards for landholders who host renewable energy generation, transmission or storage."

"The VFF has been frustrated by the lack of any regulatory safeguards for landholders who host renewable energy generation, transmission or storage."

"We must not lose sight of the people neighbouring to this infrastructure. If there is a lack of regulation and safeguards for those hosting the infrastructure, then there's absolutely nothing for those in close proximity who have material impacts."

“It’s completely unacceptable that there remains no proper planning processes to make sure it is the right project in the right place with the right safeguards.”

“It is disappointing that rather than improving the regulatory and decision-making framework, the government has instead decided to further erode the limited rights of landholders.”

“Our focus is firmly on understanding the detail of this announcement and what it means for farmers and our regional communities,” Ms Germano said.

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