

## **Powercor commitment on engagement and land access**

Stakeholder engagement has become a major focus for transmission projects. Whether it be transmission or distribution, effective and genuine engagement is fundamental to gaining the social licence to operate as an electricity service provider. Social licence is built by collaborating and resolving issues with impacted communities and identifying ways to increase benefits and minimise negative impacts.

We are highly attuned to the importance of engagement. As a distributor, we are used to dealing directly with customers and impacted communities on major projects. For the past two years we have undertaken one of the most extensive reset engagement programs ever undertaken in Victoria by a regulated business. We understand that engagement must be built on trust, credibility, and legitimacy.

If granted this licence, we won't be constructing a new transmission grid. Our focus will be on building and upgrading transmission infrastructure to connect contained projects to the grid. Powercor is committed to using the land access powers consistent with the ESC's Land Access Code of Practice, and expectations of demonstrating strong social licence.

It has been our practice when building new distribution lines to negotiate with landowners and reach a mutual agreement rather than relying on compulsory land access powers. This is an approach we intend to continue when building new transmission infrastructure. We will also, where practical, seek to minimise the impact on landowners by using existing land access rights, such as constructing lines in road reserves as an alternative to crossing private land.

Since our original application, the Land Access Code of Practice has been published. We have provided updated documentation to the ESC to demonstrate our approach to this matter, but wish to take the opportunity to share more information transparently with landowners.

When and how Powercor would use land access powers would depend on the type of asset, the works needed and the views of the relevant landowners. For example, if we build our own terminal station, we could use our own property and wouldn't need access to other privately owned land or to use any land access powers.

Consistent with our commitment to compliance with the Land Access Code of Practice, where private landowners are involved we would:

- communicate and engage through our stakeholder engagement team, tailored to meet individual and community needs
- engage early and work with relevant landowners on an agreed solution, such as a developing a memorandum of understanding for a land access or easement
- make available our complaints handling processes to landowners
- seek direct agreement with landowners on an easement. This means we do not use the land access option until it is needed, and instead allows us to work directly with landowners to agree to access
- when accessing land, we stay only as long as required and leave the land as we found it
- follow all relevant environmental, fire, health and safety policies and document and address any incidents in accordance with our environmental policies
- only as a last resort, consider use of statutory land access powers



We hope that this provides landowners with a greater understanding of our work and our commitment to engage with them collaboratively, openly and consistently with the long-term interests of Victorian consumers.

More information is available at: [www.powercor.com.au/transmission](http://www.powercor.com.au/transmission)

Powercor invites customers to engage with us, and the ESC on this important topic. Feedback is welcomed at Engage Victoria: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/>