

Regulator expects better engagement around land access for transmission projects

Victoria's Essential Services Commission has issued a clear statement of expectations around engagement and conduct to facilitate land access for major electricity transmission projects.

The statement details 22 principles and provides examples to support respectful and effective interactions between transmission companies and landowners navigating land access arrangements.

Essential Services Commission CEO Dr John Hamill says best practice engagement is crucial to building social licence for new transmission projects in the state.

"The statement of expectations promotes effective engagement between landowners and transmission companies as critical partners in the delivery of essential electricity transmission," said Dr Hamill.

"It seeks to balance the rights of landowners with the statutory right of transmission companies to access lands by establishing clear expectations about how the right to access land is applied."

The statement considers broad stakeholder feedback and is informed by best practice land access frameworks in other states and industries.

The principles cover effective communication and engagement, impacts on land and landowners, and complaints handling and dispute resolution.

The commission developed the statement following concerns raised by stakeholders relating to land access for the Western Victoria Transmission Network Project being delivered by AusNet Transmission Group Pty Ltd (AusNet).

The commission will require AusNet to report on its performance against the principles each month. Failure by AusNet to report as required by the commission may result in enforcement action.

Non-confidential information will be published to support transparency. This information will be used to develop an enforceable code of practice around land access in 2023.

The commission will work with the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) to ensure it has capability to respond to complaints arising from the application of the statement of expectations.

“Upgrades to Victoria’s transmission network are necessary to transition Victoria’s power system to net zero emissions by 2050,” said Dr Hamill.

“This statement provides clarity and confidence for all parties to progress discussions on land access arrangements for major transmission projects ahead of an enforceable code of practice.”

The statement of expectations will come into effect on 1 June 2022.

Find out [more about the statement of expectations](#).

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