

Submission to the Land Access Code of Practice Consultation Paper

Submission received through Engage Victoria

From 2 February to 3 March 2023, the commission accepted submissions on our Land Access Code of Practice consultation paper via Engage Victoria. Stakeholders were also able to provide feedback through answering survey questions. We are using the responses to these questions to inform our thinking when developing the draft Land Access Code of Practice.

Only questions where a response was provided are included.

Date submitted: 26 February 2023

Name: Rosemary Irving

Stakeholder/interest group: Community

Q2. Compared to the principles set out in the Statement of Expectations, what should the Code of Practice have more prescriptive obligations for?

Wishes of the landholder.

Q3. What specifically should be required of electricity transmission companies? What are the benefits and costs of having more prescriptive requirements?

To listen to the community and fit in with their needs. The benefits are less unrest and a better outcome for the community and landholders.

Q4. Do you agree that the Statement of Expectations covers enough scope?

Disagree

Q5. If the scope needs to be widened, what other activities should be included in the Code of Practice?

Biosecurity provisions are scanty. If companies come onto land have they ascertained if previous land they have been on is clean of weeds and animal diseases. Do they clean their vehicles between farms. Would they know if a landholder had contagious footrot in their sheep, for example (infected farmers may not disclose the presence of the disease)

Q6. What has your experience been with land access following the release of the Statement of Expectations?

When the community meets with Ausnet, Ausnet publishes a record of the meeting which is not how the community sees it.

Q7. What do you consider are the most important issues related to land access under section 93 of the Electricity Industry Act 2000? How should these be addressed in the Code of Practice?

If landholders don't want some form of infrastructure on their land, what recourse do they have? All they can do is object until they are worn down. The system is inequitable, it doesn't matter how you dress it up.

Q8. What other options should we consider in addressing these identified issues? Are there alternative elements to consider within the Code of Practice? What are the costs and benefits of these alternatives?

Yes, for example, landholders do not want industrial pylons on their land but, in general are prepared to allow underground cabling. The benefits are cooperation and a happier outcome for the community. It is always cost which is proposed as making things unattainable yet these are private companies only interested in profit and not the community good.

Q11. What other options for complaint handling do you think when we're developing the Code of Practice?

If landholders want to follow through with a complaint and go to VCAT for example, they need to employ costly legal assistance. The system is totally inequitable.

Q12. Is there anything else you want us to consider when drafting the Code of Practice?

Put cables underground. The government supports and is proud of putting transport infrastructure underground in Melbourne but finds it too expensive to underground utilities in rural Victoria. The government should support private developers who have underground cable connections to the grid.

