



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### AusNet continues standover tactics to force the Western Victoria Transmission Project through

AusNet continue to employ standover tactics and bullying as they attempt to gain access to private properties across Western Victoria, in order to undertake 'physical surveys and investigations' for the ill-conceived Western Victoria Transmission Network Project (WVTNP).

This comes off the back of AusNet representatives offering gift vouchers to gain access to private property just 12-months ago.

In 2019, the Victorian Government announced the WVTNP in a bid to deliver green energy, by connecting large scale wind and solar farms in West Victoria to homes across the state.

In June (2021), AusNet's failed Community Consultation Group saw community representatives resign as a result of continued misrepresentation, deception and lack of empathy from AusNet representatives.

In a bid to forge ahead, AusNet are now forcing access to private properties across the proposed corridor, terrifying landholders of what might happen to their livelihoods and homes.

AusNet's letter to landholders states, *"Where a voluntary land access agreement is not reached, AusNet Services is authorised under law to access and undertake work on any land without landowner consent."*

AusNet is only allowing residents 7-days to comply before they will force entry onto the properties.

Information provided by AusNet about land access for 'surveys and investigations' does not explain the process or provide landholders with any legal protection.

One of the residents to receive the letter from AusNet is Mrs Barbara Ford from Plumpton.

"Throughout the entire process AusNet has not provided clear information about their intentions, or the activities required to undertake these 'physical surveys and investigations on our property."

"Not to mention the stress it has put us under during another COVID lockdown, where we have been hurriedly trying to get some advice about our rights and obligations," said Mrs Ford.

Arch Conroy from Bunding, has also been surprised by AusNet's lack of understanding.

"I feel like AusNet is working against us, not with us. My property is my business, so I need to understand exactly what the investigations will involve and if my business will be impacted. None of this has been made clear to us," said Mr Conroy.

To further confuse and worry landholders, AusNet have been sending a considerable number of letters to the wrong landholder names and or addresses.

Community alliance *Stop AusNet's Towers* spokesperson Emma Muir believes this is another example why we need to hold the Victorian Government and the Energy Minister Lily D'Ambrosio accountable.

"The entire project has been a disgrace from the very beginning. AusNet continues to be employed as a contractor by the Government, despite being held responsible for the Black Saturday bushfires and continued mismanagement of projects like the WVTNP".

"The National Electricity (Victoria) Act, gives the Energy Minister the power to override the project contract, so we urge the Minister to send the WVTNP back to the drawing board and to put the transmission lines underground."

"Victorian's deserve a renewable energy future that is founded on innovative, reliable and scalable technology, because we do not want to see our energy future disabled with outdated and dangerous technology like the WVTNP," said Mrs Muir.

**CONTACT: Emma Muir, MCHPA, 0412 685 404 MORE INFORMATION:  
[stopausnetstowers.com.au](http://stopausnetstowers.com.au) or [facebook.com/stopausnetstowers](https://facebook.com/stopausnetstowers)**