



STOP AUSNET'S TOWERS

MEDIA RELEASE

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AusNet's compensation an insult to Western Victoria

AusNet's proposed landholder compensation plan for the Western Victoria Transmission Network Project (WVTNP) is an insult to the people of Victoria.

Emma Muir, Chair of the Moorabool Central Highlands Power Alliance, said: "AusNet have finally put a price on our lives and livelihoods. The proposed compensation package for those impacted by the Western Victoria Transmission Network Project is an insult.

"AusNet is forging ahead with a project that will see bushfire risk skyrocket, farms that have been in families for generations wiped out and Victoria's \$250 million potato industry decimated – along with the 1250 jobs it supports.

"AusNet's wants to buy our community's silence for \$200,000 per 85m-high transmission tower. It's loose change for a \$17 billion multinational and it doesn't cover a fraction of the millions of dollars of loss landowners face – many for generations.

"No amount of money will protect us from the threat of bushfire, save our farms from devastation or stop the loss of precious landscapes.

"Our community is not for sale. The compensation plan is a PR stunt that attempts to divert people away from the devastating impacts of the project."

The compensation plan does nothing to address the many thousands of community members who sit adjacent the proposed transmission corridor who stand to lose significant amenity and will face heightened risk specifically from bush fires.

The WVTNP comprises about 380 transmission towers and high-voltage lines connecting Bulgana, near Ararat, and Sydenham, in Melbourne's West, as well as a massive new 20-hectare terminal station north of Ballarat. The smallest transmission towers will be the height West Gate Bridge; the largest taller than the MCG's light towers.

The project will:

- Carve a 190km path through pristine landscapes, including some of the state's highest value and most productive agricultural land – Victoria's food bowl.
- Increase the risk of catastrophic bushfires in what is already a high fire danger region. CFA captains have written to the Premier and Chief Fire Officer to express their concerns and to oppose the project in its current form.
- Require compulsory acquisition of hundreds of hectares of land, some of which has been worked by the same families for generations.
- Threaten the habitat of native and endangered species, and impact several State and National Parks.

"Victorians 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," Ms Muir said.

**CONTACT: Emma Muir, MCHPA, 0412 685 404 MORE INFORMATION:
stopausnetstowers.com.au or facebook.com/stopausnetstowers**