**Western Victorian Transmission Network Project and Impact on Property Values:**

To: **The Hon. Maryanne Thomas, Minister for Regional Development, Agriculture & Resources**

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Dear Minster,

I am writing to ask that you stand by the thousands of people, including me, whose properties, livelihood and choice to take up the Australian dream will be adversely affected by the proposed Western Victoria Transmission Network Project (WVTNP). I am asking that you please do what you can to take AusNet and this project back to the drawing board.

Property values of thousands of community members right along the 190km of proposed transmission lines which will include up to 80-metre-high towers will plummet by up to 40%. Would you want to live next to or near these unsightly industrial transmission lines and massive towers? Homes, properties and livelihoods that will be directly affected by the project will see property values decline for a number of reasons including a significant loss of land use due to the massive (up to 100-meter-wide) easements that will be imposed to accommodate this project.

The adverse impact on property values will extend well beyond those properties directly affected by the proposed alignment. It will also affect thousands more people whose homes will be devalued due to loss of visual amenity, ongoing environmental impacts, health implications and the increased fire risk this project will cause. I call on you to support these people affected and ensure ALL options for renewable energy for ALL Victorians are considered.

Those of us who choose to live in a rural setting accept the risk of bushfires and have plans in place to mitigate these risks. However, the addition of overhead transmission infrastructure which is proven to cause both bush and grass fires as well as significantly hampering the fighting of these fires is an unacceptable increase in risk to the thousands of community members who will be impacted. Could you please explain how you can justify this increased risk and likely loss of lives?

The substantial detrimental impacts of this project on thousands of Victorians reach far beyond any compensation. If you think about the reasons that people choose to live regionally/rurally such as; being close to nature, getting away from large city infrastructure, visual amenity of the scenery, peace and quiet – all of this will be taken away and property values negatively impacted. This is a direct result of AusNets lack of genuine consultation and willingness to seek better outcomes for all Victorians. This can be stopped. I urge you to do what you can to stop this project in its current form and ensure a future of renewable energy with fewer impacts to the community.

There are far better options available to transfer the energy that will provide the required capacity for renewable energy with far less impact on the value of tens of thousands of community members. I ask you again to please stop AusNet’s Towers and take this project back to the drawing board.

Underground energy transmission [is best practice around the world](https://www.tdworld.com/grid-innovations/transmission/article/20966809/reimagining-the-grid) and [Australian scientific studies support this.](https://www.moorabool.vic.gov.au/files/content/public/about-council/large-projects-impacting-moorabool/western-victoria-transmission-network-project/wvtnp-high-level-hvdc-alternative-scoping-report.pdf?utm_source=open_letter&utm_medium=letter&utm_campaign=link_click) Underground energy transmission is more reliable, safer and more efficient and will not be impacted by extreme weather, or increase the risk of catastrophic bushfire and will have dramatically less impact to property values. A cost benefit analysis needs to consider far more than the initial capital cost.

No amount of compensation will offset the devaluation, loss of amenity and increased risk, particularly for bushfires this project will cause. The impacts these proposed transmission lines will have will be permanent and cannot be mitigated later. What will you do for the thousands of Victorians that will be impacted by the proposed transmission lines? I urge you to please step forward and help drive the future thinking required to provide a renewable energy solution that not only Victorians, but all Australians and our natural environment deserve.

I call upon you to take a stand with everyone along the 190km of the proposed corridor and stop AusNet’s Towers and take this project back to the drawing board to deliver the project in a way that minimises the impact on our communities and environment.

Regards,