

I am a planner with over thirty years of experience. For the past three years I have seen the turmoil that the current ISP and projects under it are causing the farming community.

Land Use and land use planning is constitutionally the role of the States. It is not appropriate for AEMO to determine REZ and transmission lines without any process to understand the land use and landholder impacts.

It is critical that landholders be treated with respect and be seen as stakeholders. Failing to consider anything except end market costs until the route has been selected is not in the best interest of the end consumer, a fair and transparent process, or the ability to minimise the impact of these projects on individuals or our food security.

AEMO needs to develop meaningful tools to understand agricultural land uses, and what the current rules mean in relation to the [transformation of agriculture](#). They need to look at where REZ should be taking into account the likelihood of generation being up taken by landholders (as they have commercial consent) or the impact of forcing transition in the wrong spot – for example the Ballarat and Shepparton REZ.

From there you can look at transmission and how best to do that. What is the need? What areas should be avoided. What technology to use. Can impacts be mitigated? Is compensation able to ensure no harm.

The process needs to be comprehensive and given the evidence of transmission projects versus generation projects, be done on commercial consent.

This is highlighted by Clarkes Hill. Commercial payments for a wind energy facility at Clarkes Hill was not viable as the payments offered were less than the value of the lost production. Less than 10 years later AEMO identifies this land in an ISP and then develops a REZ around it, with no consultation with landholders or industry. It then grants a license to build transmission without seeking landholder views. Three years on landholders are still in the dark about how they will be compensated and what will be in or out of the calculation. Media releases imply the benefit sharing payment will be the compensation payable which is the equivalent to being paid under 10 cents for a tonne of spuds. I think the route may double the actual cost of the project over the life of the project if compensation is properly calculated.

We know we need renewable energy. We know we need transmission. Parties such as the VFF has been calling for strategic planning for that transition for over four years. The need to do it has fallen on deaf ears and now compulsory acquisition is being compounded with orders to remove review rights. That is not the way to social license or an open, robust and transparent process.

My sister keeps asking what would Monash do? I think he would think about the future, about new technology and a fair process for all.

The MCA for VNI West failed to have a single indicator that understood agricultural impacts. In many instances they directed transmission to areas that had little fragmentation or land use conflict – the exact area you need to protect.

AEMOs CEO and Minister Bowen has said that the regulatory approach is broken. Any meaningful resolution of this needs to start from understanding that lines on the plan have real life consequences and need to be placed with a full understanding of the consequences of the actions.

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