

19 May 2020

COUNCIL TAKES STRONG STAND ON WESTERN VICTORIA TRANSMISSION NETWORK PROJECT

At last night's meeting, Council took a strong stand on the Western Victorian Transmission Network project.

Mayor, Cr Lesley Hewitt said that Council has heard loud and clear from the community that decisive action needs to be taken to protect our valued agricultural land.

"We understand the need to transition to renewable energy, but our communities are in complete distress about what this project means for their productive farmland," said Cr Hewitt.

"We need to balance the need for renewable energy with that of our community, particularly those who have much to lose if the transmission lines are built on their farmland," said Cr Hewitt.

The Motion states:

That Council:

1. Supports the transition to renewable energy and acknowledges the need for new infrastructure, however, we understand and strongly sympathise with the real distress the Western Victoria Transmission Network Project proposal is causing to our farming and wider communities
2. Write to AusNet and appropriate decision-making authorities such as DELWP, the Australian Energy Market Operator, and State and Federal MP's urging:
 - a. the WVTNP Environmental Effects Statement process to properly consider and apply existing and emerging technologies and construction methods that are making underground methods of power transmission a viable option;
 - b. the decision-making authorities to consider the wider impacts beyond the electricity market such as non-market economic, social, and environmental impacts to enable the actual cost of WVTNP to our community to be assessed; and

- c. noting Council is opposed to the construction of a terminal station in valuable farming or heritage sensitive areas;
3. Include funding from within Council's Strategic Planning budget towards preparing a strong submission to the Environmental Effects Statement highlighting the bushfire risk, threat to agricultural land, and impact on historic and sensitive landscapes and this funding is detailed in a report to Council that outlines the scope and priorities of the Strategic Planning Works Program.
4. Communicate with its communities what action it has taken, what action it intends to take, provide opportunities for community feedback to council, and provide links to support organisations.

Regular updates are available at <https://www.hepburn.vic.gov.au/western-transmission-lines-project/>.

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