

28 September 2023

Benn Barr
CEO
Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC)
GPO Box 2603,
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Mr Barr,

Re: Proposed rule change seeking to improve social license for transmission through enhancing engagement with local communities

GrainGrowers welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed rule change seeking to improve social license for transmission through enhancing engagement with local communities.

GrainGrowers is conditionally supportive of the proposed changes to improve consultation with impacted communities.

As Australia transitions to renewable energy, a growing number of agricultural landholders are being approached to host electricity transmission lines on their land. Many growers have raised concerns about the poor consultation processes, with some reporting only finding out their land will be impacted via social media.

While GrainGrowers recognises the importance of securing new transmission lines, this must be done in a manner that is sensitive to the impacts on agricultural land and takes all reasonable steps to avoid or minimise adverse effects on communities, landholders and the environment.

It is important to note the significant power imbalances between land holders and the developers of transmission lines, that can often lead to inequitable outcomes.

It is vital all proponents of transmission line projects and infrastructure engage as early as possible with communities in affected areas to ensure communities and individuals have the maximum amount of time to consider the short, mid and long- term life cycle implications of projects to make informed decisions.

Improved regulation is critical for ensuring that affected landholders and communities have reasonable opportunities to engage with decision making that can, or will, impact their lives and livelihoods.

GrainGrowers attaches its land use policy which outlines GrainGrowers' principles for government, regulator and industry consideration. In relation to the rule change, this aligns to GrainGrowers policy which call for "early, ongoing, and meaningful engagement and communication with landholders and communities about proposed development sites".

Should we be able to provide further assistance or if there are any enquiries relating to this letter, please contact Sean Cole, Advocacy and Rural Affairs Manager on 0435 991 370 or sean.cole@graingrowers.com.au.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zachary Whale'.

Zachary Whale
General Manager of Policy and Advocacy