Subject: **Response to the Renewable Energy Zone Development Plan Directions Paper**

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I am contacting you to provide feedback on the **State Government of Victoria REZ Development Plan Directions Paper and the proposed 6 Renewable Energy Zones**.

Visual Pollution and Renewable Energy. Why is the Victorian Government simply trading one form of pollution for another?

Renewable Energy is being rolled out to lessen environmental impact. So why wouldn’t the delivery of this renewable energy not be in sync with this purpose and lessen impact on the environment (regardless of the initial cost difference).

By building overhead transmission lines to support renewable energy zones we are trading one form of pollution for another - CO2 emissions for Visual Pollution.

We might be reducing greenhouse emissions by not burning coal, but the Visual Pollution is simply unacceptable. If a transmission network company does not use underground technology, their contract should be cancelled. This is what the community wants, there is no Social Licence to install overhead transmission networks.

Overhead cables that carry high-voltage electricity and are supported by large pylons are considered an extremely unattractive scar on the landscape. Underground cables can transmit power across densely populated areas or areas where land is costly or environmentally or aesthetically sensitive. Underground and underwater crossings are also a practical alternative for crossing rivers (see Murraylink).

The community, including residents, businesses, landowners, and environmental groups rally behind underground transmission because it minimises impacts to the community, while reliably delivering power. Underground transmission answers many of the requirements’ communities have come to expect.

The construction of 85m high transmission towers through our regions does not serve to conserve or enhance our Significant Landscape or protect our Visual Amenity. It serves to Visually Pollute our regions.

Underground transmission preserves natural beauty and land value. The lines are out of sight, which answers one of the main concerns for overhead lines–visual impact. While impacts vary per location, by nature overhead lines permanently alter the look of residential neighbourhoods, scenic areas, and historical sites. While aesthetic impact isn’t the only transmission line concern, it tops the list of long-term impacts that can’t be mitigated.

It’s great the Victorian Government are working towards Renewable Energy Targets and are moving away from coal, but in doing so, they should make sure the infrastructure they are building is in sync with our reasons for moving to renewable energy in the first place… Conserving and enhancing our environment for the future.

I urge you to insist on a comprehensive review of the Renewable Energy Zones strategy and to insist on utilising underground High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC).

Kind regards