



Environmental Effects Statement (EES) Process

Position Statement

Overview – One Gippsland Position

There is acknowledgement of the importance of local government and community engagement in this process to enable appropriate outcomes are achieved. Currently, to ensure that the EES is both technically correct and complete, the avenue to do so is via submission and a hearing via an inquiry process.

In order for local councils to fully participate in the EES process and represent views of the community, there is a requirement to engage technical experts, legal representation and expert witnesses due to the inherent complexity of the matters and expertise required. This is in addition to Council staff also being assigned to the process. This results in substantial financial costs to local councils (in a rate capped environment) and opportunity cost as staff are subsequently stripped from existing project work.

Ensuring that the information in the EES is technically correct and complete before consulting with the community is critical – which the current process does not provide. It is recommended that a group of independent experts be established to provide independent peer review of the EES documentation prior to the commencement of consultation with the community. This expert group could provide advice to the relevant panel or committee during the hearing process. A desire to keep the process moving to the exhibition stage, prior to the information being accurate and complete equates to a disservice to the community.

Position Statement

One Gippsland calls on the Victorian Government to implement reforms to make the EES process fairer and less costly for local government and the community whilst continuing to maintain the ability to fully participate by:

1. Establish and fund an independent group of experts that is solely responsible to ensure the technical accuracy and completeness of EES's by providing peer and independent reviews; and
2. Undertaking an urgent review of the current EES legislative framework.

For More Information

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