

#BT Social Licence Guideline Priority Commitments 2024-25

Commitment to better practice

The Energy Charter **Better Practice Social Licence Guideline: Co-existence and shared value opportunities for transmission + agricultural landholders** was released in early 2023 following a co-development process between agricultural (our Community Outcomes Group) and transmission businesses. The Guideline focussed on opportunities for transmission businesses to improve how they engage, respect and benefit agricultural landholders and their business operations. The Guideline identifies 20 Priority Actions and 17 Better Practice Opportunities that would improve outcomes.

In 2023 six transmission businesses (AusNet Services, ElectraNet, Marinus Link, Powerlink Qld, TasNetworks and Transgrid) publicly committed to improving their practices by implementing the 37 actions identified in the guideline and being held accountable for progress.

In June 2024 following 12-months of implementation, an Independent Review (funded by Energy Consumers Australia) was conducted of their collective progress. The Review, conducted by Nine Creeks Consulting, identified that of the 37 actions:

- ✓ 15 had been committed to
- ✓ 20 were being progressed
- ✓ 2 had not been progressed.

Continued commitment

Five Energy Charter Signatories: **AusNet Services, Marinus Link, Powerlink Qld, TasNetworks and Transgrid** have re-committed to a further 18-month period (July 2024 – December 2025) of implementing better practices followed by a second Independent Review. In consultation with our Community Outcomes Group, **20 priority actions** have been agreed to be of focus in this second phase. These Agreed Priority Actions for 2024-25 are listed in the table below.

Accountability

Ag + Energy Roundtable

These Energy Charter Signatories will provide progress updates to the Energy Charter Ag + Energy Roundtable during the implementation period. These will be opportunities to discuss progress, flag any challenges and clarify expectations.

18-month Reports

In February 2026, the Energy Charter Signatories will submit a report outlining the progress they have made to implement the Agreed Priority Actions and providing demonstratable case-studies.

These Reports may also share progress on:

- The continued implementation of the 15 “committed” actions, particularly as part of an introductory / context setting section within the report.
- Progress made on the 2 de-prioritised actions, particularly if an opportunity has arisen to demonstrate implementation.

Further Independent Review

The second Independent Review will be undertaken in early 2026.



Agreed Priority Actions 2024-25

Priority Actions + Better Practice Opportunities	Agreed outcome	Notes following COG consultation
1.1 Community involvement in route planning		
1. Participation fees	Continue implementing	
2. Consideration and communication around undergrounding	Agreed Priority Action	
3. Upgrades and maintenance activities in construction and operations	Agreed Priority Action	
4. Addressing power imbalances between transmission businesses and landholders	Continue implementing	
5. Consideration of public amenity of easements on public land	Deprioritised	Title description amended to clarify focus on public land.
1.2 Engagement and communication		
6. A designated person, 24/7 contact number and facilitated engagement	Continue implementing	
7. Regional engagement teams	Agreed Priority Action	COG confirmed that being able to access teams locally is important. Local team members who understand local issues and to have a consistent presence in the region are highly valued.
8. Community engagement training for land agents and complaints officers	Continue implementing	
9. Better understanding social factors	Continue implementing	
1.3 Tower placement and screening		
10. Placement of towers to minimise impacts	Continue implementing	
11. Minimising visual impact of substations	Agreed Priority Action	Title description amended to clarify focus on substations. COG confirmed that focus is amenity of substations and that implementation reporting can include visual mitigations that are implemented pre-build, including as part of site selection considerations.



Priority Actions + Better Practice Opportunities	Agreed outcome	Notes following COG consultation
1.4 Access		
12. Provide clear schedules, detailing requirements for access	Continue implementing	
13. Easy and timely access to records of access on request	Agreed Priority Action	
14. Clear steps and contacts for complaints	Continue implementing	
15. Management plan reviews	Agreed Priority Action	COG provided advice that the plan needs to be a live document and that transmission businesses can improve clarification about the review and update process. COG raised concern that there is no support for a farmer to access an independent reviewer or arbiter in relation to compliance. Recommended that businesses build-in support for farmers to seek 3rd party review of TNSP compliance.
16. Financial support for landholder mitigation activities	Continue implementing	
1.5 Compensation		
17. Transparent, plain English information regarding compensation	Continue implementing	
18. Annualised compensation	Agreed Priority Action	COG highlighted ongoing concern that farmers want annual compensation for impacts to business operations (separate to from land compensation). COG also concerned that transmission businesses do not fully understand the impact on machinery use.
19. Easy and timely access to compensation for professional costs	Continue implementing	
1.6 Safety education		
20. Proactive, tailored education programs on safety	Agreed Priority Action	



Priority Actions + Better Practice Opportunities	Agreed outcome	Notes following COG consultation
21. Collaborate with emergency service agencies	Continue implementing	
2.1 Biosecurity		
22. Strong, tailored biosecurity management plans	Agreed Priority Action	
23. Ongoing management of biosecurity risks during project lifecycle	Agreed Priority Action	Title description amended to clarify expectations. COG highlighted the significant concern regarding biosecurity risks, and the need for risk management across the lifecycle of an asset - particularly during operation. Also highlighted that plans need to be bespoke for the property and locality.
2.2 Use of materials and management practices		
24. Engage with landholders on soil requirements	Agreed Priority Action	COG reinforced that soil management is a very important issue. Transmission businesses should have systems and policies in place that include engagement (including pre-entry) with farmers about soil protection needs.
25. Protect soil from compaction, erosion, or other damage	Agreed Priority Action	
2.3 Farm infrastructure		
26. Engagement with landholder regarding use of scrap materials and equipment	Agreed Priority Action	
27. Provide labour and equipment in-kind	Agreed Priority Action	COG clarified that this is not about implementing an employee volunteer program. Focus is more, when on site discuss with the farmer small things that can be done while you're there to provide some assistance e.g. tidying up an access track or scraping the dam. Key expectation is to discuss with farmers and offer some help.
3.1 Mental health and services		
28. Reduce barriers to accessing counselling and mental health support	Continue implementing	



Priority Actions + Better Practice Opportunities	Agreed outcome	Notes following COG consultation
3.2 Community benefit sharing		
29. Develop Community benefit Sharing programs	Agreed Priority Action	
30. Advocate for improved access to affordable, reliable energy for host communities	Agreed Priority Action	Title description amended to reflect agreed expectations. Discussion highlighted the COGs continued concern about local energy reliability for host communities. The COG highlighted the need for transmission and distribution businesses to work together to tackle the regulatory challenges. Noted that action could perhaps be delivered through community benefits program. COG agreed that transmission business action should focus on advocacy. There is support from COG to review the issue across the supply chain and how Industry can work together to deliver better local energy equity outcomes.
31. Prioritise impact-aware Community Benefit Sharing	Agreed Priority Action	
3.3 Community infrastructure		
32. Consultation on community infrastructure needs	Agreed Priority Action	
33. Assistance in negotiating power purchasing agreements	Deprioritised	Discussion agreed this is similar to the local energy equity issue considered in review proposed at #30. Agreed that this action could be removed as a priority.
34. Increase regional coordination and collaboration	Continue implementing	
3.4 Community economic development		
35. Preference procurement from local suppliers	Continue implementing	
36. Social and environmental criteria in procurement decision-making	Agreed Priority Action	
37. Agreements with local businesses for local goods and services	Agreed Priority Action	

