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ISSUE 26 • 4th Anniversary

*The Uncensored News*

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## Farmers Hit with Fines as Net Zero Escalates: Power Lines vs Property Rights

By MICHAEL ARBON

Michael Arbon is an Australian commentator covering finance, politics, liberty, faith, family and national issues. He hosts Arbon About Australia and RCR, where he explores current events and the ideas shaping the country.

Twelve Victorian farmers recently received fines in the mail from their state government. They were penalised for locking their own gates and denying authorised officers access to their farmland as part of planning work for VNI West.

VNI West is a proposed high-voltage transmission line that will run roughly 240 kilometres through western Victoria, with a preferred easement 70 metres wide.

The project is just one part of a much larger transmission build-out. The Australian Energy Market Operator's Integrated System Plan (ISP) estimates that around 6,000 kilometres of new transmission



lines will be needed across the national grid by 2050.

Marnoo sheep stud farmer Trent Carter says he won't pay the fine and he'll fight it in court. Trent does not stand alone. Farmers across western Victoria, and Australians in both the city and the country, are increasingly questioning what the transition to net zero will mean for their land, livelihoods and communities.

And we should remember what "agricultural land" actually means. A farm is not simply a business. It is a way of life. For many families, it is their home. A home worked, loved and handed down through generations.

Transmission lines don't simply consume productive farmland or change the landscape. They intrude into the place where a family lives, works and raises their children.

Australia's food and fibre production is too important to take for granted.

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