



MEDIA RELEASE

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“IT’S THE VIBE”: STEVE CURRY BRINGS *THE CASTLE* TO VICTORIA’S LONGEST ENVIRONMENTAL HEARING

MELBOURNE - The fight for Western Victoria’s future took a powerful turn this week as actor **Steve Curry** joined the Western Victoria Community Alliance (WVCA) at the Western Renewables Link (WRL) Environment Effects Statement (EES) Hearing - now the longest environmental inquiry in Victoria’s history.

Curry, whose own family property lies inside the proposed transmission corridor, told the panel that the mental health and social trauma being inflicted on rural communities was “far more real and far more devastating” than anything portrayed on screen.

“In *The Castle* we were acting out a story about ordinary people pushed around by big corporations,” Curry said. “But what’s happening here isn’t a script. It’s real families whose lives are being dismantled one decision at a time. The stress, the uncertainty, the fear of losing home - it takes a toll you can’t unwind.”

A Historic Fight With Historic Human Impacts

Running for 15 weeks until March 2026, the WRL hearing surpasses even the North East Link and Metro Tunnel inquiries. This extraordinary duration reflects the profound social and psychological harm being exposed in evidence.

For weeks, the panel has heard that landholders are experiencing **chronic stress, loss of community, financial insecurity, fear of bushfire entrapment, deteriorating mental health**, and what independent experts have called “unmitigable social harm.”

The WVCA argues that the proposed WRL’s design of 80-metre lattice towers cutting through farms, homes, and high value environmental landscapes including some of Victoria’s highest bushfire-prone ridgelines - directly undermines the wellbeing, safety, and dignity of the people it affects.

“People out here are exhausted,” Curry told the panel. “They’re trying to farm, raise families, and keep their lives steady, while a project of this scale sits over them like a permanent shadow. The mental pressure is relentless.”

Institutional Betrayal: When the Process Causes the Harm. Independent expert evidence presented on behalf of Moorabool Shire has highlighted serious failures in the Proponent’s Social Impact Assessment (SIA). Curry pressed the experts with questions that forced the panel to confront the psychological reality faced by affected communities:

On Institutional Betrayal: “Does the SIA’s failure to recognise deeper harms reflect a broader pattern where the process itself becomes a source of injury? When people feel dismissed or unheard, that’s not just bad policy - it’s damaging to mental health.”

On Bushfire Anxiety and Safety: “In high bushfire-risk areas where residents have only one escape route, does living with the permanent fear of being unable to evacuate amount to an ongoing breach of safety and wellbeing?”

On Unacceptable Harm: “When people lose their sense of home, place, safety, and certainty, at what point does that become an impact that no reasonable person would accept?”

A Broken Plan - and Real Alternatives

The WVCA maintains that while renewable energy is essential, **destroying the social and environmental fabric of Western Victoria is not**. Modern undergrounding technology and the use of existing easements represent feasible alternatives that would avoid:

- irreversible environmental loss
- heightened bushfire risk
- severe mental health and social impacts
- generational agricultural loss
- landscape and amenity destruction

“People aren’t anti-renewables,” Curry said. “They’re anti being run over by a process that ignores the human consequences. If the transition to clean energy destroys the communities it claims to protect, then something has gone very wrong.”

The Hearing Continues

The inquiry resumes next week with further evidence on bushfire risk, transmission safety, and underground feasibility.

About the Western Victoria Community Alliance (WVCA)

The WVCA is a community-led incorporated association representing affected landholders, businesses, and organisations across Western Victoria. The Alliance advocates for least-impact infrastructure solutions and the protection of regional agricultural, environmental, and social assets.

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