



30.05.24

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
City of Ballarat
PO Box 655
Ballarat VIC 3353

Dear [REDACTED],

RE: Site visit request

Thank you for your letter in relation to the City of Ballarat's latest resolution about the Ballarat East Zone Substation and we acknowledge the council's ongoing interest in this important project.

Since late 2022, we have met with the council on multiple occasions about this project and provided ongoing updates on our site investigations and selection process.

We have always been genuine in our engagement so we are declining the offer to meet onsite as this will only serve to provide false hope to residents that we are open to considering any other sites at this stage in the project.

It's important to provide the community clarity and certainty about this project. As we have outlined previously, after extensive investigations we selected the York Street property as the best solution as it's owned by Powercor, can be easily integrated with our network, can support the ongoing operations of existing bushfire mitigation devices and can be delivered on time to meet capacity requirements for the growing region.

As this zone substation must be operating ahead of the 2025-26 summer to maintain reliable and safe power supply in the area, we are proceeding with York Street. Our planning and design work is well progressed and we are on track to start construction work in February 2025.

As previously offered, we are happy to provide councillors and council officers an in-depth briefing at the council chambers on the project, similar to the session we attended mid last year.

We will also continue engaging with residents in different ways, including in organised community sessions and one-on-one meetings. I also want to emphasise **we have provided, and will continue to provide, the community multiple opportunities to speak with Powercor representatives**, provide feedback and learn about the project. Our engagement has included:

- **Seeking feedback from residents about any concerns they may have** if York Street was selected. All feedback, including impact on visual amenity, property prices, noise, fire risk, flooding

and electromagnetic fields (EMF), was addressed during our site selection process and we shared this information at community meetings, letterbox drops and on our website.

- **Hosting four community drop-in sessions** (2/6 December 2023 and 22/24 February 2024) that were open to the public, including residents and councillors. More than 60 residents attended the sessions, which provided opportunities to speak directly with a range of specialists, including experts in network planning, health and safety, construction, property valuers and senior decision makers.
- **Attending a community forum**, hosted by Eureka MP Michaela Settle and attended by Mayor Des Hudson and Deputy Mayor Peter Eddy, to hear directly from individuals about their concerns and respond to questions.

In September, we will host a further two community drop-in sessions and present residents with the shortlisted exterior design options for their consideration. We will again have a range of specialists available to answer any questions residents may have about the project.

We are also organising a webinar in July with EMF and water modelling experts for residents to hear about the studies we have conducted and ask questions.

I'm also pleased to inform you we have started rolling out the \$2 million Community Benefits Package, including the Direct Neighbour Payments.

We've also had fantastic interest from eligible residents wanting to take up our offer of a payment to install rooftop solar. To date, we have had more than 30 residents express interest and accept this offer.

We are keen to work closely with the council as we review more than 30 ideas from the community about how to invest our \$200,000 Community Legacy Fund and would like to organise a meeting with yourself to progress this work. Many in the community are keen to know what will be supported from the fund.

I look forward to hearing from you about a potential councillor briefing as well as how the council would like to work with us to roll out the Community Legacy Fund.

Kind regards,

[Redacted signature block]