

10 February 2022

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Submission
Integrated System Plan (ISP)
Australian Energy Market Operator
Email: ISP@aemo.com.au

Attention: Submissions

Draft Integrated System Plan Submission

Northern Grampians Shire Council in Western Victoria are supporters of renewable energy infrastructure and production. As a Local Government Area directly impacting the Western Victoria Transmission Network Project (WVTNP) we are well placed to submit feedback on the Draft Integrated System Plan.

We support the ISP in defining the transmission investment option undertaken when considering development pathways. This will ensure ease of community engagement and reduce the impacts on community anxiety. Further, a staged approval and delivery process, such as that undertaken during the WVTNP would ensure the project sound community and stakeholder engagement and reduce complexity of future projects.

Council remains committed to the principles of our role and sustainability being in the Western Victoria Renewable Energy Zone (REZ). Whilst supportive of the ISP's preliminary view which proposes REZ Design Reports will be required for the Murray River REZ and the Southwest Victoria REZ (including the proposed 500kv single-circuit REZ Expansion Project between Mortlake and Sydenham). It does not appear that a REZ design report for Western Victoria REZ (V3) and an overarching integration plan thoroughly evidence our capacity in its entirety to contribute VRE. We would also like to see a REZ design report for Western Victoria, and an overarching plan between proposed REZ design reports.

Council notes a key difference in the current proposal for the WVTNP, is a drop in voltage of the line from Ballarat (Waubra) to Bulgana from 500kv to 220kv. The REZ design report would future proof downstream considerations made, including those which currently propose to limit the opportunity of Northern Grampians Shire to fully realise the economic benefits of this project over the long-term.

To this, consideration needs to be given in how to effectively prepare REZ Design Reports, particularly in Regional Victoria. There may be areas where AEMO Victorian Planning may consult or delegate their responsibility to AusNet. This presents a risk that the public consultation and engagement process may become fractured and will need to be actively managed.

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Council is committed to enabling and supporting the attraction of business and industry to our shire. To better assist us, industry and governments need to engage our communities in an open and transparent manner where the REZ and ISP projects are taking place. To educate and inform our communities on requirements for such projects, the benefits these projects can bring our shire in economic diversity, and in the creation of jobs and in sharing of benefits.

Recognising our support and the capacity of our region to benefit from renewable energy generation, it is the opinion of Council that locally created renewable energy should be harnessed by the Region. By utilising renewable energy, locally, through the creation of Community Energy Hubs, micro-grids or market arrangements, we hope to build our capacity for business and industry. We believe it can contribute to regional jobs, generate economic stimulus, lower emissions, increase resilience and assist our adaptation for more extreme climate events.

We look forward to a response in due course and appreciate the opportunity to have our submission heard on this matter.

Yours faithfully



LIANA THOMPSON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

