

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP
Minister for Climate Action
Minister for Energy and Resources
Minister for the State Electricity Commission



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NEW COMMUNITY BENEFITS IN RENEWABLE ENERGY TRANSITION

The Allan Labor Government is making sure communities, landowners and Traditional Owners that host crucial energy infrastructure benefit from the energy transition with a dedicated fund for community energy projects.

Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio today launched the draft *Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) Community Benefits Plan* for consultation.

The plan recognises the important role that rural and regional communities are playing in the renewable energy transition by providing direct investment in projects that improve energy reliability and affordability for local communities.

A REZ Community Energy Fund will be created in each of the state's six renewable energy zones – communities will be able to apply for funds for projects that improve power supply, lower energy bills and create energy jobs. Examples could include things like community microgrids, network upgrades or bulk purchases of solar panels or heat pumps.

Benefits for Traditional Owners will be developed as part of this plan – this will be done through direct engagement. The design will aim to give Traditional Owners control over the form these benefits will take and ensure they deliver economic empowerment and support self-determination.

The funds for communities and Traditional Owners are in addition to landowner payments that were legislated in the Parliament. Landowners that host transmission infrastructure will receive \$200,000 per kilometre of transmission hosted on their properties, which is on top of existing compensation arrangements.

Guidelines for significantly impacted neighbour benefits will also be introduced, recognising properties next to land that hosts new transmission infrastructure can have visual amenity impacts that cannot always be adequately addressed through measures such as screening or vegetation.

The new measures in the draft REZ Community Benefits Plan will apply to all new transmission projects, including the Western Renewables Link, VNI West and transmission for proposed offshore wind projects.

VicGrid is visiting communities in May and June to discuss the draft Plan through workshops and drop-in sessions. Feedback will be used to shape the final Plan, to be released later this year. For more information visit engage.vic.gov.au/vtif-rez-community-benefits.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio

"We're making sure regional and rural Victorians and Traditional Owners get the best outcomes from the energy transition with special funds for community energy projects."

"As our old coal fire generators close, new renewable energy and transmission infrastructure is critical to keeping the lights on and delivering energy reliability and affordability for all Victorians."