

Media Release

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



Friday, 20 October 2023

RENEWABLE ENERGY POWERING MOBILE NETWORK RESILIENCE

The Allan Labor Government is supporting the development of innovative renewable energy technologies to bolster mobile network resilience in five Victorian regional areas that suffered outages after the powerful 2021 storms.

Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio today announced more than \$1.1 million for Telstra to commission the Telstra Hydrogen Fuel Cell Pilot – a project that will boost energy resilience during storms around Coldstream, Kinglake, Christmas Hills, Chum Creek, and Neerim North.

The Telstra Hydrogen Fuel Cell Pilot project will deploy a 10-kilowatt renewable hydrogen generator at each of the five locations and will facilitate rapid changeover to allow continuous operation of site load and mobile connectivity when mains power outages occur.

These renewable hydrogen systems will provide 72 hours of backup power – many times more than current battery backup power at these sites. The project aims to demonstrate the reliability of renewable hydrogen as a zero-emissions fuel for generator backup power over diesel.

This project was funded under the \$6.6 million Renewable Hydrogen Commercialisation Pathways Fund. The program has awarded grants to five projects that will trial renewable hydrogen in real-world applications.

The Government's nation leading Gas Substitution Roadmap – to be updated later this year – confirms that renewable hydrogen will play a critical, but targeted role in Victoria's renewable energy transition.

Through the Renewable Hydrogen Business Ready Fund, more than \$600,000 is being shared by eight recipients to develop business cases or feasibility studies to support their transition to renewable hydrogen.

These projects are a key step towards developing renewable gases, which will help us reach our ambitious target of net zero emissions by 2045.

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

"We're supporting the state's emerging renewable hydrogen sector to play a key part our transition to 95 per cent renewable energy by 2035."

"This innovative project uses renewable energy to keep the power running during an emergency, helping to maintain vital telecommunications, which is critical as we encounter more frequent extreme weather events."

Quote attributable to Member for South Eastern Metropolitan Lee Tarlamis

"This trial will help to improve network resilience using new renewable hydrogen technology, so that Victorians can be better prepared for extreme weather events."

Quote attributable Nikos Katinakis Telstra Group Executive for Global Networks and Technology

"This Hydrogen Fuel Cell Pilot at five mobile base stations in Victoria will provide us with valuable data and experience of this emerging technology and how it may help to power telecommunications into the future."

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“We rely on mains power to operate and when that fails, we rely on temporary backup energy from batteries and generators to keep our network running, but Telstra is always keen to investigate alternative energy options to help keep our customers connected and improve the sustainability of our operations.”