

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 through direct engagement and any benefits will need to deliver economic empowerment and support self-determination.

The funds for communities and Traditional Owners are in addition to payments to landowners that host transmission infrastructure, who 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 that properties next to land that hosts new transmission infrastructure.

The new measures in the draft REZ Community Benefits Plan will apply to all new renewable energy projects built in the REZ Zones as well as new transmission 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 to 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."