



CORANGAMITE
SHIRE

Agenda

Council Meeting

**Tuesday 27 January
2026**

To be held in the Killara Centre
At the Camperdown Community
Centre
Commencing at 3:00 pm



Vision

We strive for a connected and thriving community.

Mission

We will foster opportunities, celebrate our identity and lifestyle, and provide high quality and responsive services.

Values

Teamwork

Integrity

Respect

Disclaimer

The advice and information contained herein is given by the Council without liability or responsibility for its accuracy. Before placing any reliance on this advice or information, a written enquiry should be made to the Council giving the entire reason or reasons for seeking the advice or information and how it is proposed to be used.

Council meetings are livestreamed on the Internet to provide members of the community greater access to Council decisions and debate. A recording of the meeting will be available on Council's website after the meeting (usually within 48 hours). Visitors in the public gallery may be filmed and/or recorded during the meeting. By attending the meeting, it is assumed consent is given in the event that this occurs.

Councillors



Cr Jo Beard
Tanderook Ward



Cr Geraldine Conheady
Lake Keilambete Ward



Cr Nick Cole
Mount Elephant Ward



Cr Ruth Gstrein
Gnotuk Ward



Cr Laurie Hickey (Deputy Mayor)
Leura Ward



Cr Kate Makin (Mayor)
Lake Elongamite Ward



Cr Jamie Vogels
Cooriemungle Ward



Table of Contents

1 Prayer	5
2 Acknowledgment of Country	5
3 Apologies	5
4 Declarations of Conflict of Interest.....	5
5 Confirmation of Minutes	5
5.1 Corangamite Shire Council meeting held on 16 December 2025	5
6 Deputations and Presentations	6
7 Committee Reports	7
8 Planning Reports	7
9 Officer's Reports	7
9.1 Application of Common Seal of Council 2025	7
9.2 Strategic Risk Profile Report as at 31 December 2025.....	13
9.3 VicGrid Renewable Energy Zone Submission	23
9.4 Ministerial Planning Permit Application PA2503700 – Mumblin Wind Farm	56
9.5 Emergency Management Response and Recovery January 2026 Fires.....	64
9.6 Tiny Towns Round Three Grant Opportunity	76
9.7 Tourism Event: Request for Fee Waiver	94
10 Other Business.....	97
11 Open Forum	97
12 Confidential Items	98
12.1 Confidential Items - Close Meeting	98
13 Close Meeting.....	98

Order of Business

1 Prayer

We ask for guidance and blessing on this Council. May the true needs and wellbeing of our communities be our concern. Help us, who serve as leaders, to remember that all our decisions are made in the best interests of the people, culture and the environment of the Corangamite Shire.

Amen.

2 Acknowledgment of Country

Corangamite Shire Council acknowledges and pays our respects to the Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung peoples, as the Traditional Owners of the Lands that we work, live and play. We also acknowledge their Elders, past and present and recognise their ongoing cultural, spiritual and educational practices.

3 Apologies

4 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

In accordance with section 130 (1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020 Councillors are required to disclose any “conflict of interest” in respect of a matter to be considered at a Council Meeting. Disclosure must occur immediately before the matter is considered or discussed.

5 Confirmation of Minutes

RECOMMENDATION

That the minutes of the Corangamite Shire Council meeting held on 16 December 2025 be confirmed as correct.

6 Deputations and Presentations

Members of the public may address Council under this section of the agenda during a meeting of Council if:

- 1) The person is addressing the Council in respect to a submission on an issue under Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989; or
- 2) The person has requested that they address Council on an issue and the Mayor has agreed that they be heard.

Requests to address Council must be received by 5.00 pm on the day prior to the scheduled meeting of Council.

Presentations made to Council in this section of the agenda may not exceed five minutes in length, although Councillors may ask questions following each presentation. If a presentation exceeds five minutes in length, the Mayor may request that the presenter ceases to address Council immediately.

7 Committee Reports

Nil

8 Planning Reports

Nil

9 Officer's Reports

9.1 Application of Common Seal of Council 2025

Directorate: Governance and Civic Support

Author: Imogen Black, Acting Manager Governance and Civic Support

Executive Summary

This report informs Council of all applications of the Common Seal made by the Chief Executive Officer under delegation during 2025 and renews the Common Seal usage delegation to the Chief Executive Officer.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. **Receives the attached list of documents sealed by the Chief Executive Officer under delegation during 2025.**
2. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer, in accordance with Meeting Procedures Local Law No.3 2016, to use the Common Seal for the following general classes of activities or transactions:**
 - **Planning and Environment Act section 173 agreements.**
 - **funding/grant agreements.**
 - **contracts endorsed by a resolution of Council.**
 - **lease agreements endorsed by a resolution of Council.**
 - **licence agreements endorsed by a resolution of Council.**
 - **transfer of land documents for transactions endorsed by a resolution of Council.**
 - **contracts awarded by the CEO within the CEO's financial delegation.**
 - **the following types of leases from the Leasing Policy:**
 - **Airstrip Hangar lease renewals, transfers, assignments or subletting.**
 - **All licence agreements, including renewals, assignments or subletting.**
 - **Crown Land license agreements.**

Discussion/Key Matters/Issues

The Corangamite Shire Council is required to keep and maintain a common seal under s 14(b) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The common seal is used to execute documents of significant importance and is to be used in accordance with local laws. The seal carries legal weight, as the presumptive position at law is any document bearing the seal is prima facie properly sealed and legitimate.

The Common Seal may be used by Council as required as authorised by Council resolution. Additionally, under *Meeting Procedure Local Law No. 3 2016 (Local Law)*, Council may, by resolution, delegate the use of the Common Seal to the Chief Executive Officer for general classes of activities or transactions. The Chief Executive Officer is required by the Local Law to regularly advise Council of the use of the Common Seal when applied under delegation.

At its meeting on 27 January 2024, Council resolved to authorise the Chief Executive Officer to apply the Common Seal of Council to the following general classes of documents:

- Planning and Environment Act section 173 agreements
- funding/grant agreements
- contracts endorsed by a resolution of Council
- lease agreements endorsed by a resolution of Council
- licence agreements endorsed by a resolution of Council
- transfer of land documents for transactions endorsed by a resolution of Council
- contracts awarded by the CEO within the CEO's financial delegation
- the following types of leases from the Leasing Policy:
 - o Airstrip Hangar lease renewals, transfers, assignments or subletting
 - o All licence agreements, including renewals, assignments or subletting
 - o Crown Land licence agreements.

The Common Seal was applied by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) during 2025 to the documents listed in the attached table.

To ensure compliance with the *Local Law* and Council's Leasing Policy the delegation to the CEO to apply the common seal to general classes of documents requires renewal.

Options for Council Consideration

Council is required to receive the list of documents sealed under CEO delegation in accordance with the *Local Law*.

Council may choose to renew its delegation to the CEO relating to usage of the Common Seal of Council for certain types documents.

It is recommended that Council receives the attached list of documents to which the Common Seal was applied under delegation by the Chief Executive Officer during 2025 and renew the classes of activities and transactions currently delegated to the Chief Executive Officer.

Alignment to Council Plan

This report is in keeping with the commitments in the Council Plan 2025-2029:

Strong Civic Leadership

Be financially responsible and sustainable

Relevant Law/Policy/Legal Implications

The *Local Government Act* requires that the Common Seal be used in accordance with local laws. The *Local Law* provides that Council may, by resolution, give the Chief Executive Officer authority to use the Common Seal for general classes of activities and transactions, and if so, the Chief Executive Officer must advise Council of such use on a regular basis.

Collaborative Procurement

Nil

Consultation and Engagement

Officers requiring documents to be sealed consult the Governance team regarding the necessary requirements.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial implications identified for the subject of this report.

Diversity and Inclusion Considerations

Nil

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

Nil

Risk Consideration

Nil

Conflict of Interest

No officer involved in the preparation of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Attachments

1. Common Seal usage under CEO delegation 2025 [9.1.1 - 1 page]

Common Seal usage under CEO delegation 2025

Matter	Date Sealed
Landlord's Disclosure Statement - Retail Premises not Located in Retail Shopping Centres for 15 Hamilton St Timboon for a period of three years.	21/01/2025
Licence Renewal for Part of the Cobden Airstrip (Hangar) for a period of five years.	10/04/2025
Transfer of Lease for 220 Park Road Camperdown until July 2035.	05/05/2025
Lease Agreement for the premises known as 31 Main Street, Derrinallum for a period of 12 months.	21/05/2025
Lease Agreement for the premises known as the David Newman Centre situated at 20A Church Street, Camperdown for a period of five years.	18/06/2025
Lease Agreement for the use and occupation of Hallyburtons Road, Cobden for a period of five years.	21/07/2025
License Agreement for the use of 3 Fox Street, Timboon for a period of 12 months.	25/08/2025
Section 173 Agreement in accordance with condition 13 of Planning Permit PP2024/126, issued for a two lot subdivision and construction of two dwellings at 13 Carmichael Road, Port Campbell.	04/09/2025
Section 173 Agreement to address stormwater management requirements of Planning Permit PP2023/141 for a two lot subdivision at 5 Parrott Street Cobden.	04/09/2025
Section 173 Agreement pursuant to Condition 9 of Planning permit PP2025/051 to address potential land use conflict between subdivided land adjacent to scoria quarry.	25/09/2025
Contract 2026003 for Cleaning of Council Buildings	16/10/2025
Renewal of Crown Land Licence for the Timboon Swimming Pool, Lambert Street, Timboon for a 3 year period.	23/10/2025
Licence for use agreement for part of 29 Grayland Street, Cobden situated on part of the Cobden Racecourse Reserve Precinct for a period of five years.	30/10/2025
Contract 2026007 for Cleaning of Council Kindergartens and Maternal Child Health Centres for a period of 2 years	06/11/2025
Licence Renewal for Hangar "H3" at the Cobden Airstrip for a period of 5 years	12/12/2025

9.2 Strategic Risk Profile Report as at 31 December 2025

Directorate: Corporate and Community Services

Author: Michele Stephenson, Manager Human Resources and Risk

Executive Summary

This report presents the Council's strategic risk profile as at 31 December 2025. The Corporate Risk Register (CRR) Strategic Risk Report attached under separate cover details each strategic risk, and its current and residual risk profile. The report is provided for Council's oversight and is prepared in accordance with the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 requirement for Risk Reports - *'six-monthly reports of strategic risks to Council's operations, their likelihood and consequences of occurring, and risk minimisation strategies'*.

Recommendation

That Council receives the Corporate Strategic Risk Profile Report for the six-month period ended 31 December 2025

Discussion/Key Matters/Issues

Council's risk management process conforms to the international standard for risk management - AS/NZ ISO 31000:2018.

The Corangamite Shire Risk Management Framework is designed to provide an integrated approach to managing risk across the Council. The framework comprises the Risk Management Policy, Risk Management Procedure, and the Corporate Risk Register (CRR).

The CRR documents Council's strategic and operational risks, including an assessment of the likelihood and consequence of each risk occurring, along with the risk mitigation strategies and controls in place.

Through the CRR, risks and implementation of associated controls and treatments are monitored and reported.

The CRR is reviewed on a regular basis, with operational risks identified, updated or adapted to reflect changing and emerging circumstances. The Risk Appetite, or Risk Tolerance, is the amount of risk that the Council is willing to accept to achieve its objectives. It is established by assigning each of the risk categories one of the following risk appetites:

Risk Tolerance	Explanation
LOW	<p>Council has a low appetite for taking risk in the relevant category. Council will not accept a high level of risk taking to achieve objectives. Risk mitigation activities involve avoiding the risk or implementing robust controls to ensure its likelihood and / or severity are minimised as much as possible.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with all relevant legislation. • Zero tolerance for taking any risks in relation to health and safety of Council staff, contractors, visitors or members of the public who may be impacted by Council activities.
MODERATE	<p>Council has a moderate appetite for taking risk in the relevant category. Council is willing to accept a moderate level of risk taking to achieve objectives, putting in place appropriate risk management actions to mitigate risk to an acceptable level (within defined risk thresholds)</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project investment / service delivery.
HIGH	<p>Council has a high appetite for taking risk in the relevant category. Council is willing to accept a high level of risk, or actively seeks opportunities with a high risk/reward pay off to achieve its objectives.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment / new service opportunities that provide a high risk/reward payoff for the organisation or its stakeholders

Risk Tolerance for Categories of Risk

Risk Category	Risk Tolerance
Business Processes & Systems (business interruption)	LOW to MEDIUM
Community	LOW to MEDIUM
Environmental	LOW to MEDIUM
Financial	LOW
People	LOW
Regulatory	LOW
Reputation (Public Image)	LOW to MEDIUM
Children (Childsafe)	LOW

Category	Consequence				
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Business Processes & Systems (business interruption)	Minor errors in systems or processes requiring corrective action - minor delay only	Intermittent delays in systems or processes requiring workarounds	Temporary loss of access to key data - recoverable but inconvenience for clients	Serious disruption to systems - more than 3 days downtime and loss of key data. Significant problems for clients	Critical system failure, permanent loss of data. Operations severely affected
Community	One-off issue with service delivery for a shire town - no economic or social impact	Minor impact on service delivery for a shire town resulting in short term economic and social impact	Critical services suspended from a shire service centre resulting in closure in excess of 5 days causing significant impact	Critical services withdrawn from a shire population centre resulting in permanent disadvantage (and potential decline)	Critical services withdrawn from a shire population centre resulting in an inability to access to services
Environmental	Isolated incident of poor environmental practice with no lasting impact	Temporary damage and / or pollution to the environment	Residual polluting damage to environment requiring remedial work and restoration	Damage to the environment requiring significant long-term reparation and external reporting	Total & permanent damage to the environment resulting in enforcement action against Council
Financial	Less than \$100K loss. No significant impact on programs	\$100k - \$250K loss. Minor impact on programs	\$250k - \$1M loss. May require a program to be curbed	\$1M - \$3M loss. Program/s curbed or significant impact to the Long-Term Financial Plan	Council is no longer financially sustainable and requires State Government Intervention
People	Injuries or illness not requiring medical treatment	Minor injury or first aid treatment case	Severe injury causing hospitalisation or multiple medical treatment cases. Loss through departure of key person - delay in replacing 3 months	Life threatening injury or multiple serious injuries causing hospitalisation. Departure of several key personnel simultaneously	Death or multiple life-threatening injuries.
Litigation	Isolated breach of regulation - rectified without cost or delay	Under excess claim for minor acts	Negligent or systemic acts resulting in lodgement of claim with Council's insurer	Prosecution and / or litigation against Council and / or individual staff members	Serious non-compliance by Council results in severe financial penalties from state government and / or

				uninsured liability claims.
Reputation (Public Image)	Critical editorial local media	Negative media campaign over 2 weeks	Organisation subject to ongoing criticism in local media	Organisation subject to ongoing state/national media criticism and investigation from integrity agency Council dismissed and Administrators appointed by State Government
Children (Childdsafe)	Isolated, one off, minor child behaviour issue with service delivery, without any well-being or harm to child.	Child behaviour issue with service delivery, causing unintentional accident / harm, requiring review of supports for child.	Child abuse, harm or neglect allegation / incident, including e-safety, needing investigation, immediate response, external reporting and duty of care.	Substantiated child abuse, harm or neglect including e-safety and / or major incident and / or accident. Serious life-threatening harm or death to child.

The Risk Assessment Process

Maintaining the CRR is an ongoing process of identifying and mitigating new and existing operational risks by 'risk owners'.

For each risk the CRR contains:

- A description of the risk
- The likelihood that the risk may occur
- The impact or consequence if the risk occurs
- Existing controls in place to mitigate the risk
- The Risk Rating (likelihood x consequence)
- Treatment plans to mitigate the risk.

From this analysis a Residual Risk Level is determined.

The following Risk Matrix is used to determine the Risk Rating for a risk.

	Consequence / Likelihood	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Is almost certain to occur in most circumstances (80% plus)	Almost Certain	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme
Will probably occur (50-80%)	Likely	Medium	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
Might occur at some time in future (20-50%)	Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	Extreme	Extreme
Could occur but doubtful (5-20%)	Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	High	Extreme
May occur but only in exceptional circumstances (<5%)	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High

Level	Description
Low	Manage by routine procedures
Medium	Specific Management responsibility
High	Needs senior management attention
Extreme	Detailed action plan required

Council's strategic risks and their risk rating

Full details of each strategic risk, including the likelihood, consequence, existing controls and proposed treatments are outlined in the Strategic Risk Profile Report (provided under separate cover). The report includes the current risk profile (after controls and before treatments) and residual risk profile (after the application of both controls and treatments). The heat map and table below present Council's strategic risks and show the risk profile (rating) following the application of existing controls (current rating) and additional mitigating treatments have been applied (residual risk).

Current Risk Rating

	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Almost Certain					
Likely			124		
Possible		55	45, 46, 47, 50, 52, 56, 103, 104, 121, 122, 123		
Unlikely			51, 53, 54		
Rare					

Residual Risk Rating

	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Almost Certain					
Likely					
Possible		55	45, 50, 52, 103, 104, 122, 123		
Unlikely			46, 51, 53, 54, 56, 121, 124		
Rare			47		

Note: Numbers refer to Strategic Risk Reference Number

Risk No	Risk Description	Residual Risk Rating
124	STRATEGIC RISK - Emergency management planning is ineffective.	Medium
123	STRATEGIC RISK - Council fails to support, protect and advocate for agricultural activity in the region.	Medium
122	STRATEGIC RISK - Council ineffectively manages the health, social and economic impacts on the community from infectious diseases and pandemics affecting humans and/or animals	Medium
121	STRATEGIC RISK - Ineffective strategic planning to support future business and population growth and demographic change	Medium
104	STRATEGIC RISK - Council demonstrates poor governance and ethical standards	Medium
103	STRATEGIC RISK - A cyber-attack or unauthorised access compromises the integrity of Information Communication and Technology Systems	Medium
56	STRATEGIC RISK - Failure to maintain a safe and healthy workplace	Medium
55	STRATEGIC RISK - Failure to provide a qualified and competent workforce	Medium
54	STRATEGIC RISK - Council infrastructure is inadequately maintained	Medium
53	STRATEGIC RISK - Ineffective community engagement.	Medium
52	STRATEGIC RISK - Community health and wellbeing services are not safely or competently delivered	Medium
51	STRATEGIC RISK - Ineffective adaptation or response to climate variability, adverse environmental conditions and natural disasters	Medium
50	STRATEGIC RISK - An environmental incident occurs	Medium
47	STRATEGIC RISK - Litigation against Council due to a statutory or policy breach	Low
46	STRATEGIC RISK - A fraud or corruption event occurs	Medium
45	STRATEGIC RISK - Legislative or regulatory changes	Medium

Conclusions

Corangamite Shire Council objectives are set out in the Council Plan, and the effective management of risks to achieving these objectives is the primary aim of the Risk Management Framework.

The consistent application of risk management processes is essential to managing these risks. The CRR is a key component of the framework, providing a structured approach to identifying, assessing and managing strategic and operational risks.

Regular reporting to Council and the Audit and Risk Committee supports effective oversight of risk management practices. This report provides Council with the strategic risk profile as at 31 December 2025.

Options for Council Consideration

Council can receive the Corporate Risk Profile Report with or without amendment.

Alignment to Council Plan

This report is in keeping with the commitments in the Council Plan 2025-2029:
Strong Civic Leadership

- Be financially responsible and sustainable.

Relevant Law/Policy/Legal Implications

The report is provided in accordance with the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 and Part 3 of the Council's Risk Management Framework.

Collaborative Procurement

Nil

Consultation and Engagement

The Leadership Team and other risk owners continue to manage and monitor risks in consultation with the Executive Leadership Team. Strategic risks are reviewed by Councillors and the ELT to ensure that they remain relevant and aligned with the objectives set out in the Council Plan 2025 – 2029.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial implications identified for the subject of this report. Ongoing management of the CRR reduces the likelihood of risks that may result in financial impacts.

Diversity and Inclusion Considerations

Regular review of the CRR supports the identification of emerging and existing risks that may impact inclusion, access or community wellbeing.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

The CRR identifies and manages strategic and operational risks that may affect the environment, climate resilience, emergency management planning and sustainable practices.

Risk Consideration

Failure to maintain and review the CRR may increase Council's exposure to existing or potential risks.

Conflict of Interest

No officer involved in the preparation of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Attachments

1. Under Separate Cover - Strategic Risk Report 31 December 2025 [9.2.1 - 40 pages]

9.3 VicGrid Renewable Energy Zone Submission

Directorate: Sustainable Development

Author: Andrew Nield, Manager Regulatory Services

Executive Summary

The Minister for Energy and Resources has released draft Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) orders and has invited Council to provide feedback.

Developed through an 18-month process led by VicGrid, the REZ order establishes designated areas in Victoria for renewable energy development.

The REZs are areas that VicGrid have identified as suitable for new solar, wind, and battery projects having regard to planned transmission infrastructure. The REZs are strategic areas that show developers and communities where future development should be focused.

There are two proposed REZs within Corangamite Shire:

- Central Highlands REZ – focused on wind and solar development near Ballarat, covering areas in the northern and eastern parts of the Shire.
- South West REZ – supporting large-scale wind projects and transmission upgrades in South-West Victoria, including areas in the western section of the Shire.

Following a review of the REZ framework and associated documentation, Council officers recommend providing in-principle support for the draft South West REZ and Central Highlands REZ, subject to changes.

Recommendation

That Council

- 1. Provide in principle support to the Renewable Energy Zone orders for the South West REZ and the Central Highlands REZ, subject to changes.**
- 2. Write to the Minister for Energy and Resources re-iterating ongoing concern and opposition to the siting of renewable energy infrastructure outside of a designated REZ.**

Discussion/Key Matters/Issues

The Victorian Transmission Plan (VTP) was prepared by VicGrid, a division of the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA). This is Victoria's first integrated roadmap for coordinating renewable generation and transmission development over the next 15 years. Work on the VTP began in 2023 with publication of draft planning guidelines and consultation on VicGrid's assessment methodology. The draft VTP was released for public comment in May 2025, which included identification of suitable areas for potential REZs. The final plan, published in August 2025, advised that the next step was for the Minister for Energy and Resources to proceed with the REZ declaration process. The declaration process would include further public consultation on the REZs.

According to the VTP, REZs have been identified to provide "a predictable and coordinated approach to developing energy generation and transmission infrastructure" and to "set the pathway to a fair and orderly energy transition, providing much-needed certainty to communities and clear signals to industry on where to invest." The plan aims to ensure "the right amount of energy infrastructure is built in the right places at the right time to keep the lights on and deliver power to Victorian homes and businesses as coal-fired power plants close" (VicGrid, 2025a)

The purpose of the REZs is to guide development toward locations with strong renewable resources and appropriate land-use characteristics, while providing certainty for developers and clarity for affected communities. Each REZ represents a focal point for future energy generation over the next 15 years, with individual projects still required to meet existing environmental and planning approvals.

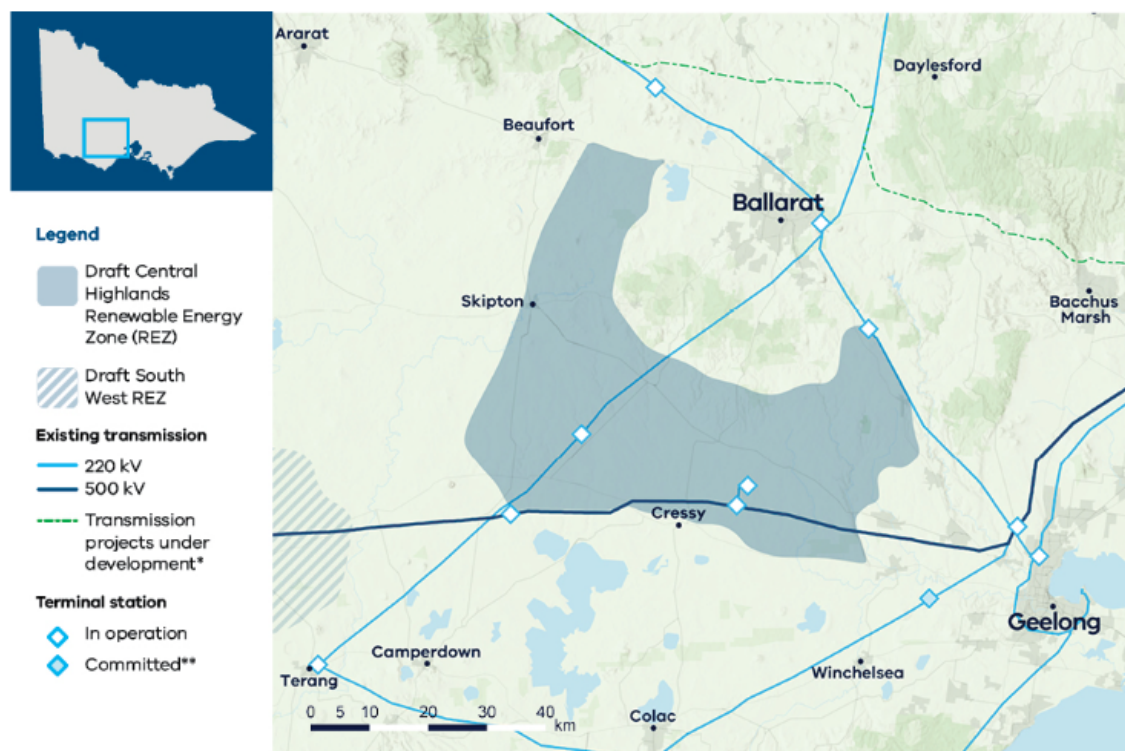
Development outside a REZ may still proceed but will be subject to a Grid Impact Assessment under the forthcoming Victorian Access Regime to ensure they do not disadvantage REZ-based generators (VicGrid, 2025a, p. 91).

The Minister for Energy and Resources has now issued draft orders for 5 onshore REZs, which are currently out for public consultation. Each draft order sets out a map of the zone, transmission projects to enable the zone, and the intended hosting capacity that the planned transmission network could support in the zone.

Parts of Corangamite Shire fall within two of the five proposed REZs.

Central Highlands REZ – which is located south west of Ballarat, encompassing parts of Golden Plains, Corangamite, and Pyrenees local government areas (LGAs), with smaller inclusions in Moorabool and Colac Otway. It is within the Registered Aboriginal Party boundaries of the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation. The REZ introduction is justified on the basis of strong wind and solar potential, and proximity to 500 kV and 220 kV transmission lines. Further details on the Central Highlands REZ order can be found in Attachment 1 & 2.

Map of the draft Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone



South West REZ – comprises two distinct areas in South West Victoria, positioned south east (Macarthur-Darlington) and north west (Casterton-Balmoral) of Hamilton, spanning Moyne and Southern Grampians Councils, with smaller portions in the Glenelg, Corangamite and West Wimmera LGAs. The south-east section is within the Registered Aboriginal Party boundaries of Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. The north-west section is within the boundaries of Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. The REZ introduction is justified on the basis that the area has the ability to support large scale wind projects and transmission upgrades. Further details on the South West REZ can be found in Attachment 2 & 3.

Map of the draft South West Renewable Energy Zone



Key matters/issues

Council has been an active participant in VicGrid's consultation process over the past eighteen months. It is encouraging to see that the two Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) affecting the Shire have been significantly refined since the initial study area was released. The original study area included large expanses of the Shire, which raised serious concerns about impacts on agricultural land, particularly dairy farming, as well as landscape values, biodiversity, cultural heritage, infrastructure, and social factors. The refinements made to date appear to reflect many of these concerns, which Council officers acknowledge positively.

Despite these improvements, there are still critical matters that require attention. The current REZ boundaries in the Shire have been applied over established towns (like Skipton), which Council Officers consider inappropriate and inconsistent with sound planning principles. These zones should be refined to exclude towns and provide a suitable buffer that protects residential areas, and opportunities for future growth.

Without these buffers, township amenity, and development potential will be threatened.

Council has consistently raised concerns in previous submissions to VicGrid regarding the inclusion of Noorat and its surrounding districts within the South West REZ. While Council Officers acknowledge the refinements made to the broader REZ boundaries to date, the proximity of the South West REZ to Noorat is not supported for several reasons:

Cumulative Impact

The Noorat district already faces significant cumulative pressures from existing and proposed renewable energy developments in the wider region. Adding further large-scale infrastructure in this locality risks compounding those impacts on landscape character, amenity, agricultural operations, and local communities. Council has consistently advocated a measured, strategic approach to renewable energy development that avoids clustering high-impact installations in areas with limited capacity to absorb further change.

High-Value Agricultural Land

The land surrounding Noorat is among the highest-value and most productive agricultural land in the Shire, particularly for dairy and mixed farming operations. As highlighted in earlier submissions, development within this area would jeopardise ongoing agricultural viability and contradict strategic directions aimed at protecting the Shire's agricultural base. The Victorian Transmission Plan and the purpose of REZs emphasise placing generation infrastructure in locations that minimise conflict with other high-value land uses; the Noorat area does not meet that test.

Significant Landscapes

The volcanic cone of Mount Noorat and its surrounds represent one of the region's most iconic geological and landscape features. The area's scenic, geological, and cultural landscape values are widely recognised within strategic documents and community feedback received during prior consultation. Renewable energy infrastructure within this landscape would risk unacceptable visual and environmental impacts that cannot be mitigated through siting or design refinements.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Significance

Noorat and the adjacent volcanic plains sit within an area of exceptionally high Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity, including known sites, artefacts and intangible cultural values. Previous engagement has consistently underscored the importance of avoiding disturbance to these areas wherever possible. The REZ framework already recognises the need to balance renewable energy development with cultural heritage protection; extending the zone into an area of such significance would be inconsistent with those principles.

Bushfire Risk

The Noorat region exhibits elevated bushfire risk due to its vegetation, topography, and climatic conditions. Introducing additional renewable energy infrastructure—particularly wind energy or high-voltage transmission—may increase ignition potential and complicate emergency management arrangements. Council maintains that placing major energy facilities within higher-risk zones should be avoided where more suitable alternatives exist elsewhere within the designated REZ.

Environmental and Biodiversity Values

The volcanic lakes, waterways, grasslands, and remnant vegetation around Noorat support diverse flora and fauna, including species and ecological communities sensitive to disturbance. Infrastructure required to support REZ development—such as access tracks, tower footings, and transmission upgrades—would introduce fragmentation and habitat loss contrary to Council’s environmental objectives. The Victorian Transmission Plan promotes placing renewable energy in locations that are environmentally suitable; this area contains constraints that make it an inappropriate candidate for inclusion in the REZ.

Renewable Energy Infrastructure outside the REZs

Another key issue is the need for the State Government to review the ‘significant economic development’ provisions (cl 53.22) within the Victorian Planning Provisions introduced in April 2024. The Government’s decision to accelerate approvals for renewable energy projects under the Development Facilitation Program (DFP)—which removes third-party appeal rights and oversight — predates the establishment of the REZs and continues to apply to projects both within and outside these zones.

The VTP specifically states that the REZs are established based on compressive technical and strategic analysis and community consultation. They reduce ad hoc proposals in highly sensitive landscapes, provide developers and investors with greater certainty, and allow network upgrades to be efficiently planned.

Council officers question why renewable energy facilities proposed outside a REZ should still benefit from the DFP pathway and the lack of transparency regarding the decision-making process that this pathway entails. Specifically, the DFP pathway does not provide for appeals to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (the Tribunal). It is fundamentally inconsistent and counterproductive for renewable energy development to be accelerated outside the REZs. The REZ is being introduced to ensure renewable energy generation is strategically located where transmission capacity, environmental suitability, and community engagement can be managed effectively.

Allowing projects outside the REZ to bypass normal planning scrutiny through fast tracked approvals creates a two-tier system that undermines the integrity of the State's planning objectives. Specifically,

- Projects inside REZs are developed within a coordinated planning framework that aligns generation with transmission capacity and planning objectives.
- Projects outside the REZs, while meeting minimum technical requirements (i.e., Grid Impact Assessment) and consultation obligations, can bypass key strategic safeguards and advance under accelerated timeframes with no third-party oversight.

Council officers observe that the current DFP pathway will create a loophole, encouraging renewable energy facilities in less desirable locations outside of REZs and eroding public trust in renewable energy projects.

Allowing accelerated approvals outside REZs undermines the very purpose of establishing REZs and compromises Victoria's renewable energy transition.

Council has recently been consulted on two DFP renewable energy projects (Swansons Lane and Mumblin Wind Farms) outside the REZs. Significant issues were identified with both projects, including poor quality and incomplete information, failure to address key local impacts (agriculture, fire risk, aviation safety, wildlife and environment and transport and roads), no independent testing of materials submitted, and inadequate community engagement. These shortcomings highlight the ongoing risks of progressing renewable energy projects outside designated REZs and reinforce the need for a more transparent, rigorous, and community-focused framework.

The progress of the abovementioned projects also raises concerns for the Great Ocean Road and hinterland areas currently subject to the Great Ocean Road Strategic Framework plan under development by the DEECA. These areas also have significant agricultural, environmental and landscape value and should not be areas where large renewable energy infrastructure is sited. This area is already contributing substantially to the energy mix for the Nation through the existing operating gas plants. In addition to raising this concern as part of this submission to VicGrid, it is proposed that Council also make submission to DEECA on the Great Ocean Road Strategic Framework Plan.

In summary, without independent review and oversight options, project information is more likely to be incomplete, biased, or selectively presented. Renewable energy risk-assessment frameworks emphasise the need for transparent, systematic evaluation of project risks to support credible decision-making and stakeholder confidence.

If the DFP pathway continues, Council officers are concerned that there is a substantial risk of an unacceptable outcome.

Options for Council Consideration

Council may decline to make a submission or include additional comments in the submission.

Alignment to Council Plan

This report is in keeping with the commitments in the Council Plan 2025-2029:

A growing and prosperous economy

- Support and promote local businesses
- Encourage sustainable agriculture
- Support and enable job creation

Quality infrastructure and community connections

- Improve traffic safety on roads and streets

Protection and enhancement of our Environment

- Support and promote renewable energy
- Adapt and mitigate climate change impacts
- Protect biodiversity and our natural assets

Strong Civic Leadership

- Be financially responsible and sustainable
- Lead by example in response to climate change

Relevant Law/Policy/Legal Implications

Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Act 2017

Planning and Environment Act 1987

Corangamite Planning Scheme

Victorian Planning Provisions

Collaborative Procurement

Nil

Consultation and Engagement

Submissions on the draft orders close on 22 February 2026, after which VicGrid will review feedback and incorporate relevant information into the final zone declarations.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial implications identified for the subject of this report.

Diversity and Inclusion Considerations

Nil

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

Council's Environment and Sustainability Strategy references the aim to move towards net zero emission and being climate resilient. Renewable energy and new energy production, storage and transmission infrastructure is an important part of meeting this aim, however this needs to occur in a planned way acknowledging the impact that these facilities have on other aspects of the environment including endangered flora and fauna, waterways and landforms.

Risk Consideration

This report addresses in part Strategic Enterprise Risk 123 – Council fails to support, protect and advocate for agricultural activity in the region. Making submissions to State Government and advocating for the protection of agricultural land is a mitigation measure for this risk. The current risk rating is medium and the residual risk is medium.

Conflict of Interest

No officer involved in the preparation of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Attachments

1. Central Highlands REZ Draft **[9.3.1 - 5 pages]**
2. Central Highlands REZ Factsheet **[9.3.2 - 6 pages]**
3. South West REZ Draft **[9.3.3 - 5 pages]**
4. South West REZ Factsheet **[9.3.4 - 7 pages]**

Public Notification: Draft Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) Order

The Victorian Government is inviting public consultation on the Draft Central Highlands REZ Order, between 20 November 2025 and 22 February 2026.

This draft Order has been prepared under section 63 of the **National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005**, which sets out the legislative requirements for making REZ Orders.

Prior to making the final REZ Order, the Minister for Energy and Resources will consult with the Premier and the Treasurer, as required under section 64(1)(c) of the Act.

We encourage all stakeholders, including local communities, industry participants, and landholders to review the draft Order and provide feedback. We also invite Traditional Owners, as rights holders with enduring cultural and legal connections to Country, to contribute their perspectives. Your input is vital to shaping a renewable energy future that reflects the values and needs of your communities. All submissions will be treated as public documents, unless clearly identified as being confidential. Submissions are encouraged to be made on a publicly available basis.

To view the draft Order and make a submission, please visit: engage.vic.gov.au/renewable-energy-zone-orders

Consultation closes: 11:59 pm AEST Sunday 22 February 2026.

For further information or assistance, please contact enquiries@vicgrid.com.au or 1800 418 341.

National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005
MINISTERIAL ORDER UNDER SECTION 63
Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone

I, Lily D'Ambrosio, Minister for Energy and Resources and Minister responsible for administering the **National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005** (the "Act"), make the following Order pursuant to section 63 of that Act.

PRELIMINARY

1. Commencement

This Order commences on the day it is published in the Government Gazette.

2. Definitions and interpretation

In this Order, unless the context otherwise requires, the following words have the following definitions:

Act means the **National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005**.

CESV Documentation means information and documentation that demonstrates how the Eligible Project is applying, or will apply, the Victorian Government's Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines.

Declared Shared Network has the same meaning as in the Law.

Declared Transmission System has the same meaning as in the Law.

Note: see Ministerial Order under section 30 of the Act made 26 June 2009, published in Special Gazette S 222 on 30 June 2009, which defines the Declared Transmission System.

Law means the National Electricity (Victoria) Law.

REZ means a renewable energy zone declared under section 63 of the Act and, in this Order, means the Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone.

Rules means the National Electricity Rules made under Part 7 of the Law, as amended or modified from time to time in accordance with Part 7 of the Law or the Act.

Transmission Hosting Capacity means the amount of Variable Renewable Generation (in megawatts) which can be connected to the Declared Shared Network by the end of the Victorian Transmission Plan planning horizon to a specified level of curtailment due to network constraints forecast within the REZ.

Transmission Project Areas of Interest means the transmission project(s) specified in clause 4(a).

Variable Renewable Generation means generation systems that produce electricity from renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind, whose output varies due to environmental conditions and cannot be precisely controlled or scheduled.

Victorian Transmission Plan planning horizon means the time period set out in section 59(1)(a) or (b) of the Act (as applicable).

3. Declaration of the Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone

The Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone is declared to be the area within the boundaries marked in blue in Schedule 1.

4. Transmission Project Areas of Interest

- a) The preferred Transmission Project Areas of Interest constitute:
- (i). the region surrounding a proposed transmission line upgrade (project 1.3 in the VTP), which involves rebuilding the existing (No. 1) 220 kV single circuit transmission line from Ballarat Terminal Station to Moorabool Terminal Station into a new high-capacity double circuit 220 kV transmission line, approximately 63 km in length; and
 - (ii). the region surrounding a proposed new transmission line (project 4.2 in the VTP), which involves constructing a new 500 kV double circuit transmission line approximately 200 km in length from Tarrone Terminal Station to Moorabool Terminal Station, passing through Mortlake Terminal Station, and includes the cut-in of the existing 500 kV transmission line between Heywood Terminal Station and Mortlake Terminal Station at the existing Tarrone Terminal Station.
- b) Subject to sections 63 and 64 of the Act, this Order does not preclude further refinement or replacement of the preferred Transmission Project Areas of Interest following further investigation or regulatory approvals.
- c) Inclusion of the preferred Transmission Project Areas of Interest in this Order does not constitute regulatory approval of any kind for the location of specific transmission infrastructure, if any.

5. Transmission Hosting Capacity

The intended Transmission Hosting Capacity for the Central Highlands REZ is 4.0 Gigawatts (GW).

6. Engagement requirements and expectations of project proponents during project development

A person who intends to apply for a REZ scheme authority for the Central Highlands REZ must submit the CESV Documentation to VicGrid in accordance with the requirements set out by VicGrid.

Dated **XX XX XXXX**

HON. LILY D'AMBROSIO

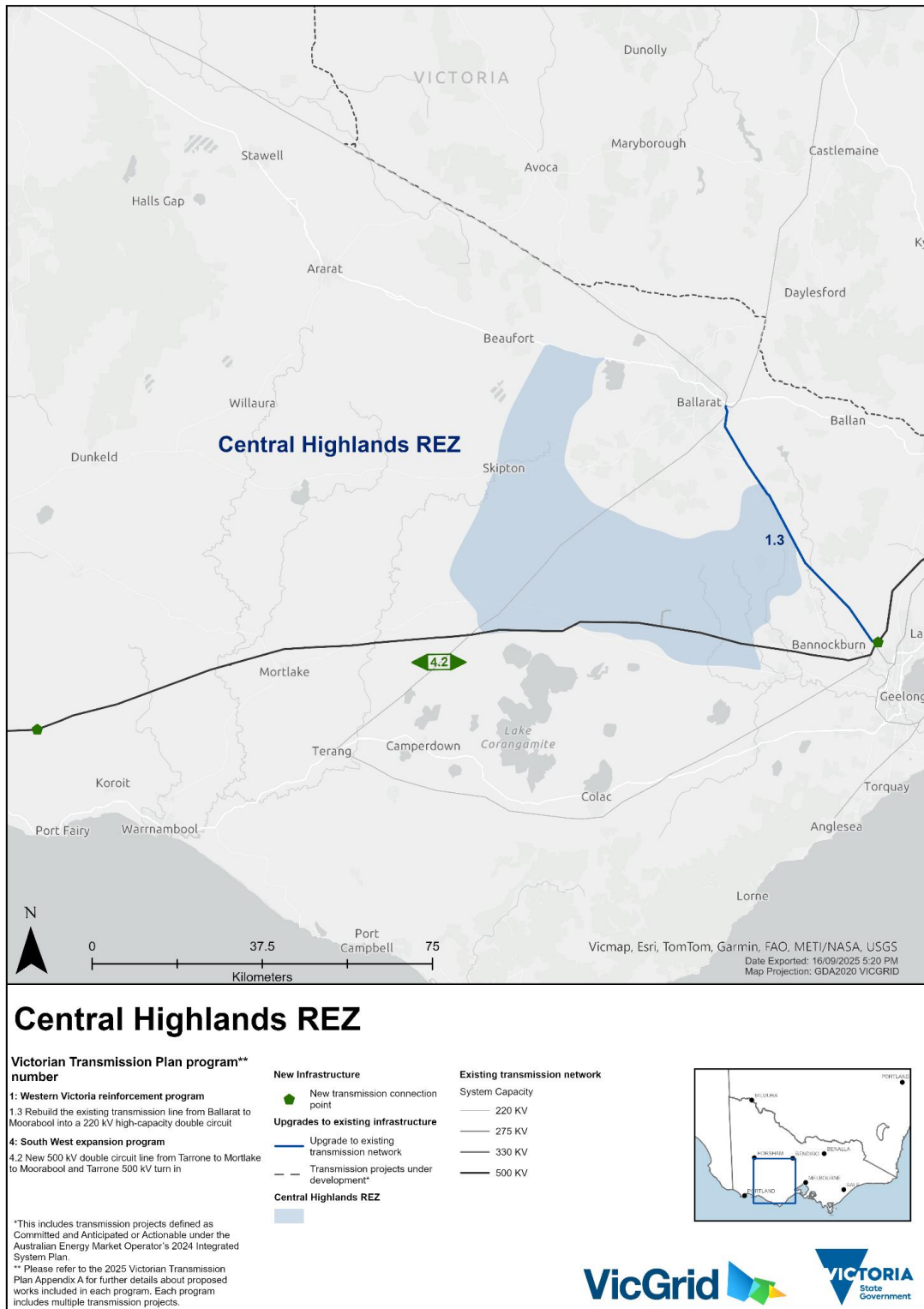
Minister for Energy and Resources

SCHEDULE 1

Figure 1 delineates the geographical boundaries of the Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone. Access to the corresponding shape file, [file name], dated [date], version [version], is available via the following link: [insert link].

Transmission networks: existing high-voltage transmission lines and routes, compiled by VicGrid are from Geoscience Australia, National Electricity Infrastructure [https://ecat.ga.gov.au/geonetwork/srv/api/records/3844c10c-ecfd-44a9-94f5-29222bb6d36d].

DRAFT

Figure 1: Central Highlands REZ

Draft Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone

November 2025

A renewable energy zone has been proposed west and south of Ballarat as part of the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan (see map on page 3). The next step is for the Minister for Energy and Resources to invite another round of feedback for consideration before formally declaring the zone. See page 6 for details.

What is a renewable energy zone?

Renewable energy zones are areas identified as the best places to host wind and solar projects and batteries for storage. In designing these areas we've considered community and industry feedback as well as information about cultural heritage, existing uses of land, and quality of wind and solar energy in the region.

Why do we need renewable energy zones?

Victoria's energy system is changing as coal-fired power stations are becoming unreliable and closing down. VicGrid is working to put in place a long-term plan to deliver the safe, reliable and affordable power Victoria needs to keep the lights on.

Renewable energy zones will:

- unlock new economic benefits for regional communities and Traditional Owners
- limit the need for additional transmission infrastructure
- help set clear expectations for how project developers engage and involve the community
- provide greater certainty about how and where renewables projects should be built.

Six zones have been proposed in regional Victoria. Together, they cover 7.9% of the state's land area, but just a fraction of that will be needed for development – less than 1% of the state's land area.



Have your say

As part of the process for declaring renewable energy zones, the Minister has issued a draft renewable energy zone order for consultation. This offers another chance for people to provide feedback and submissions to help shape development of the Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone. For more information, see page 6



Central Highlands

It's your choice

Developers must talk to landholders to get permission to build renewable generation projects (such as wind turbines, large scale solar farms or batteries) on their land. Landholders can choose whether or not to host a project.

Landholders who do host renewable generation projects will receive financial payments and economic and other benefits that they negotiate with the developer. Projects will also be required to share economic and other benefits with the whole community and meet 48 expectations under the Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines, which are currently being finalised.



The draft Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone

The draft Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone covers parts of the Golden Plains, Corangamite and Pyrenees local government areas. Small sections of the zone also sit within Moorabool and Colac Otway local government areas. It sits within the Registered Aboriginal Party boundaries of the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation.

When identifying this zone, we have carefully considered community concerns about the impacts of cumulative development. This is balanced with the pressing need to position renewable energy zones with access to high-quality wind and solar energy and near existing transmission lines.

In response to feedback on the draft Victorian Transmission Plan, an area in the northern end of the zone was removed. This reflects multiple considerations, including likely preference of generators to connect to the 500 kilovolt (kV) network to the south, land-use sensitivities, community feedback and limited land availability.

In the south, a small area was added to allow additional space close to the 500 kV transmission line, while still avoiding wetlands and lakes in the area.

How to read the map

The map on page 3 shows the draft Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone, including some of the significant land use and landscape values that influenced its location, size and shape. The identified land use and landscape values in the region are a sub-set only and are not exhaustive of the values present.

How much new energy are we planning for in the draft Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone?

Once renewable energy zones are declared, VicGrid proposes to run a competitive allocation process to decide which projects in each zone have the authority to connect the energy they produce to the grid.

We will consider:

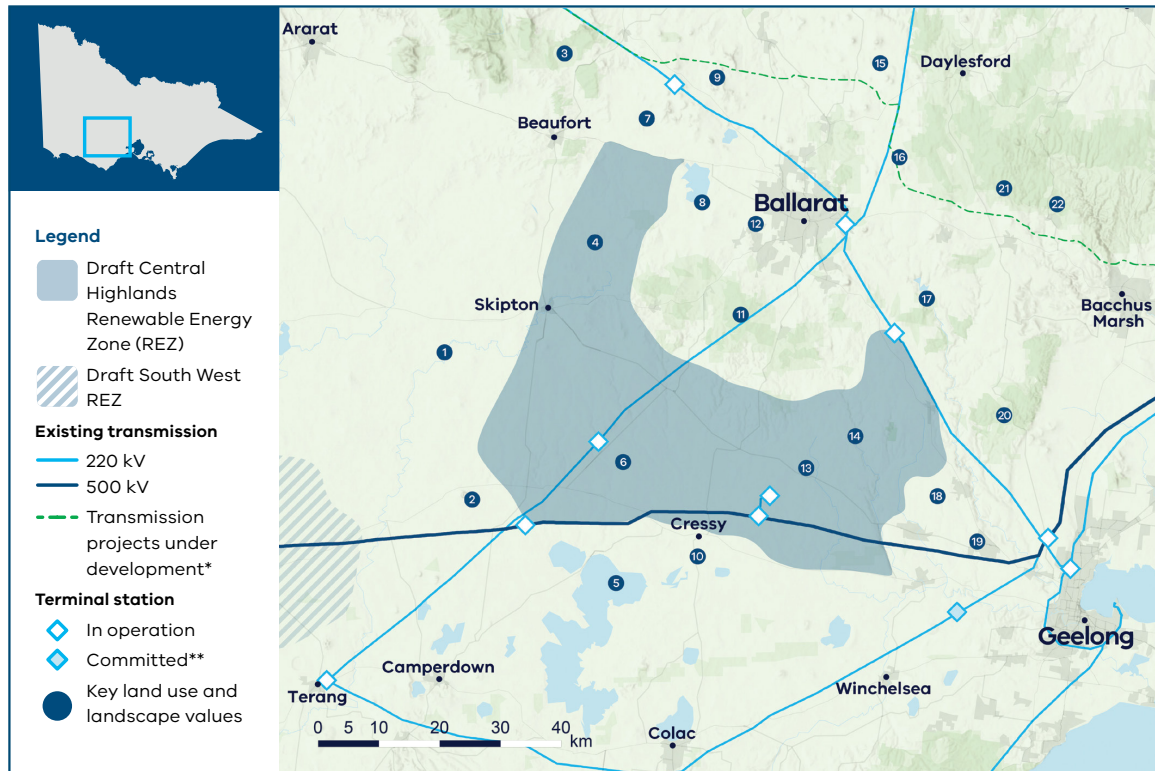
- the amount of electricity Victoria needs to generate to meet expected demand as outlined in the Victorian Transmission Plan
- ensuring the level of development inside each zone can be supported by available transmission lines
- the density of projects within each renewable energy zone
- how development can be coordinated to avoid the 'spaghetti effect' of many powerlines crossing the landscape
- whether developers are meeting expectations for landholder, community and Traditional Owner engagement and social value and economic benefits.

This will ensure we ultimately produce enough energy to meet demand while also considering the impact on communities, Traditional Owners, agriculture and the environment.

We are proposing to set access limits for each zone at the maximum amount that can be managed by the planned build-out of the transmission network.

This is not the level of development people should expect in each zone but is the maximum that the transmission network could support within the zone.

The draft Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone



Key land use and landscape values

- 1 Biodiversity:** Wetlands scattered across region with high biodiversity value, home to native flora and fauna including brolgas
- 2 Biodiversity/cultural:** Wetlands and volcanic landscape around Mount Elephant
- 3 Biodiversity:** State forests and park forming the Lower Pyrenees environs, home to native flora and fauna
- 4 Community/cultural:** Mount Emu and surrounding areas of sensitivity
- 5 Biodiversity/cultural:** Western District Lakes Ramsar-listed wetlands, home to native flora and fauna including brolgas
- 6 Agriculture:** Area with a high proportion of cropping in the southwest of the REZ, with increased livestock grazing the north and east of the REZ
- 7 Agriculture:** Horticulture farming
- 8 Biodiversity/cultural:** Lake Burrumbeet and surrounding areas of sensitivity
- 9 Community/cultural:** Mount Bolton, Mount Beckworth and Mount Ercildoune, part of the Island Uplands volcanic landscape
- 10 Biodiversity:** Brolga flocking area[^]
- 11 Biodiversity:** State parks and forests across the region, home to native flora and fauna
- 12 Community:** Area with higher aggregated dwelling density
- 13 Biodiversity/cultural:** Scattered wetlands and other areas of high biodiversity value
- 14 Biodiversity:** Area with high biodiversity values including protected biodiversity area
- 15 Heritage:** Victorian Goldfields
- 16 Agriculture:** Horticulture farming
- 17 Cultural:** Lal Lal Falls
- 18 Biodiversity/cultural:** Wetlands including protected biodiversity area, home to native flora and fauna
- 19 Community:** Proposed residential growth areas around Bannockburn
- 20 Biodiversity/cultural/community:** Brisbane Ranges National Park
- 21 Biodiversity/cultural/community:** Wombat State Forest and surrounding bushland, home to native flora and fauna
- 22 Bushfire risk:** Higher bushfire risk within densely vegetated state forests and parks

*The map shows transmission projects under development including transmission projects defined as Committed and Anticipated or Actionable under the Australian Energy Market Operator's 2024 Integrated System Plan. This map displays the proposed alignment for Western Renewables Link.

** Committed terminal station* includes new terminal stations on the Victorian Declared Shared Network that are proposed to be operational in the coming years, as identified by AEMO Victorian Planning in its Terminal Stations in Victoria report dated 2 September 2024.

[^]The Brolga is listed as an endangered under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1998* (Vic) and is at high risk of extinction in Victoria. Brolga flocking areas are areas mapped by DEECA which provide important Brolga habitat for Brolgas to drink, roost and feed during drier months until breeding. DEECA's Handbook for the Development of Renewable Energy Facilities includes specific guidance for wind facilities and the Victorian Brolga including avoiding Brolga flocking areas.

Acting on community feedback

Community and industry views have been crucial to the design of the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan.

VicGrid's role is to balance the need for new renewable projects that will deliver reliable and affordable power as coal closes with a range of other factors, including how we minimise impacts on landholders, communities, agriculture, the environment and power bills.

Not all community or industry requests have been adopted. The Victorian Transmission Plan reflects difficult choices, made by weighing up many factors to deliver a plan that best serves all Victorians.

We have used the feedback received during engagement on the renewable energy zone study area and draft Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines in 2024 and again during engagement on the draft Victorian Transmission Plan in 2025 to shape the size and location of the renewable energy zone.

What we heard

- Minimise impacts on productive farmland and agriculture, particularly horticulture production.
- Protect biodiversity and the natural environment, including wedge-tailed eagle and brolga habitats and the Wombat State Forest.
- Minimise cumulative impacts caused by increased renewable energy development and the Western Renewables Link (WRL) project.
- Avoid areas of natural hazard vulnerability, particularly areas with high bushfire risk.
- Avoid areas around Mount Bolton and Mount Beckworth, which are of local significance.
- Developers called for some areas to be included in the zone to account for projects in development.



What we did

- We sought to avoid agricultural land, including horticulture production around Ballarat and Ballan.
- We sought to protect areas of significant environmental value, especially areas with a high concentration of wetlands.
- We located the renewable energy zone close to the existing transmission infrastructure to coordinate connection and reduce the overdevelopment of transmission lines.
- We revised the original shape of the draft proposed zone to remove the area around Mount Bolton and Mount Beckworth, and added a small section to the south of the proposed zone instead.





Transmission network upgrades

The 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan also proposes 7 transmission infrastructure investment programs needed over 2025-2040, to enable development of renewable energy zones and offshore wind energy.

The programs include 4 new transmission projects: a Gippsland offshore wind transmission stage 2 project, a new line between Tarrone in South West Victoria and Sydenham

in Melbourne's north, a new line between Truganina and Deer Park in Melbourne, and an additional short line between Hazelwood and Yallourn in Gippsland. The other projects across the 7 programs range from augmentations within existing terminal stations to significant reconstruction of existing transmission lines.

Learn more about the transmission projects in the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan at vicgrid.com.au

What will it be like living in a renewable energy zone?

If you live in or near a renewable energy zone, over time you will see more development of renewable energy generation and storage. You can choose whether or not to host new renewable energy such as wind turbines, solar farms or batteries on your property. It's your decision and we encourage you to talk to your neighbours about it.

Existing planning and environment controls will still apply. All proposed projects will continue to be subject to the planning and environmental approval processes under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and *Environment Effects Act 1978*.

VicGrid will work with developers to coordinate new development and associated transmission to minimise impacts on landscapes and the environment. Only a small proportion of land in a renewable energy zone will be needed for development.

You will also see new community and regional economic benefits delivered over time as part of the Victorian Government's new Renewable Energy Zone Community Benefits Plan. This new approach will feature:

- the introduction of new Renewable Energy Zone Community Energy Funds to benefit regional and rural communities

- payments for landholders who host transmission
- guidance for payments for significantly impacted neighbours of new transmission
- a commitment to co-design a new approach to economic benefits for Traditional Owners.

Renewable Energy Zone Community Energy Funds are an opportunity to invest directly in projects that improve local outcomes and create social value and economic benefits for communities in regions hosting energy infrastructure.

Local decision-making that responds to local needs and priorities will be a cornerstone of these funds and decisions about investments will be made in consultation with regional community reference groups with broad community and industry representation.

In addition to government initiatives, developers of projects will be required to implement their own community benefits programs.

The final Renewable Energy Zone Community Benefits Plan is set to be released in 2026. Learn more at engage.vic.gov.au/vtif-rez-community-benefits

Have your say

The Minister for Energy and Resources has released a draft Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone order for consultation.

The order sets out a map of the zone, transmission projects to enable the zone, and the intended hosting capacity that the planned transmission network could support in the zone.

In this round of consultation, we are seeking any significant new information about sensitive areas, potential impacts or areas that are suitable for development that we may have missed in planning the zone.

Feedback will be considered as part of the declaration process and will also continue to shape decisions as we develop the 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan.

The public is invited to make a submission on the draft renewable energy zone order.

Submissions close on 22 February 2026.

To find out more and provide feedback:



Visit Engage Victoria

engage.vic.gov.au/renewable-energy-zone-orders



Call or email us

Call us on **1800 418 341** or email enquiries@vicgrid.com.au

Contact us



Phone: 1800 418 341

Email: enquiries@vicgrid.com.au

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Disclaimer: The information in this document is current at the time of printing, may be subject to change and should not be relied upon. Please visit vicgrid.com.au for the latest updates.



Public Notification: Draft South West Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) Order

The Victorian Government is inviting public consultation on the Draft South West REZ Order, between 20 November 2025 and 22 February 2026.

This draft Order has been prepared under section 63 of the **National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005**, which sets out the legislative requirements for making REZ Orders.

Prior to making the final REZ Order, the Minister for Energy and Resources will consult with the Premier and the Treasurer, as required under section 64(1)(c) of the Act.

We encourage all stakeholders, including local communities, industry participants, and landholders to review the draft Order and provide feedback. We also invite Traditional Owners, as rights holders with enduring cultural and legal connections to Country, to contribute their perspectives. Your input is vital to shaping a renewable energy future that reflects the values and needs of your communities. All submissions will be treated as public documents, unless clearly identified as being confidential. Submissions are encouraged to be made on a publicly available basis.

To view the draft Order and make a submission, please visit: engage.vic.gov.au/renewable-energy-zone-orders

Consultation closes: 11:59 pm AEST Sunday 22 February 2026.

For further information or assistance, please contact enquiries@vicgrid.com.au or 1800 418 341.

National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005
MINISTERIAL ORDER UNDER SECTION 63
South West Renewable Energy Zone

I, Lily D'Ambrosio, Minister for Energy and Resources and Minister responsible for administering the **National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005** (the "Act"), make the following Order pursuant to section 63 of that Act.

PRELIMINARY

1. Commencement

This Order commences on the day it is published in the Government Gazette.

2. Definitions and interpretation

In this Order, unless the context otherwise requires, the following words have the following definitions:

Act means the **National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005**.

CESV Documentation means information and documentation that demonstrates how the Eligible Project is applying, or will apply, the Victorian Government's Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines.

Declared Shared Network has the same meaning as in the Law.

Declared Transmission System has the same meaning as in the Law.

Note: see Ministerial Order under section 30 of the Act made 26 June 2009, published in Special Gazette S 222 on 30 June 2009, which defines the Declared Transmission System.

Law means the National Electricity (Victoria) Law.

REZ means a renewable energy zone declared under section 63 of the Act and, in this Order, means the South West Renewable Energy Zone.

Rules means the National Electricity Rules made under Part 7 of the Law, as amended or modified from time to time in accordance with Part 7 of the Law or the Act.

Transmission Hosting Capacity means the amount of Variable Renewable Generation (in megawatts) which can be connected to the Declared Shared Network by the end of the Victorian Transmission Plan planning horizon to a specified level of curtailment due to network constraints forecast within the REZ.

Transmission Project Areas of Interest means the transmission project(s) specified in clause 4(a).

Variable Renewable Generation means generation systems that produce electricity from renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind, whose output varies due to environmental conditions and cannot be precisely controlled or scheduled.

Victorian Transmission Plan planning horizon means the time period set out in section 59(1)(a) or (b) of the Act (as applicable).

3. Declaration of the South West Renewable Energy Zone

The South West Renewable Energy Zone is declared to be the area within the boundaries marked in blue in Schedule 1.

4. Transmission Project Areas of Interest

- a) The preferred Transmission Project Area of Interest constitutes the region surrounding the proposed new build transmission line (project 4.2 in the VTP) which involves constructing a new Tarrone Terminal Station to Moorabool Terminal Station 500 kV double circuit transmission line, through the Mortlake Terminal Station, approximately 200 km in length. It also includes the cut in of the existing Heywood Terminal Station to Mortlake Terminal Station 500kV transmission line at the existing Tarrone Terminal Station.
- b) Subject to sections 63 and 64 of the Act, this Order does not preclude further refinement or replacement of the preferred Transmission Project Areas of Interest following further investigation or regulatory approvals.
- c) Inclusion of the preferred Transmission Project Areas of Interest in this Order does not constitute regulatory approval of any kind for the location of specific transmission infrastructure, if any.

5. Transmission Hosting Capacity

The intended Transmission Hosting Capacity for the South West REZ is 3.6 gigawatts (GW).

6. Engagement requirements and expectations of project proponents during project development

A person who intends to apply for a REZ scheme authority for the South West REZ must submit the CESV Documentation to VicGrid in accordance with the requirements set out by VicGrid.

Dated XX XXX XXXX

HON. LILY D'AMBROSIO

Minister for Energy and Resources

SCHEDULE 1

Figure 1 delineates the geographical boundaries of the South West Renewable Energy Zone. Access to the corresponding shape file, [file name], dated [date], version [version], is available via the following link: [insert link].

Transmission networks: existing high-voltage transmission lines and routes, compiled by VicGrid are from Geoscience Australia, National Electricity Infrastructure [https://ecat.ga.gov.au/geonetwork/srv/api/records/3844c10c-ecfd-44a9-94f5-29222bb6d36d].

DRAFT

Figure 1: South West REZ

Draft South West Renewable Energy Zone

November 2025

A renewable energy zone with 2 sections has been proposed in South West Victoria as part of the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan. The zone includes new areas that were not previously identified in the draft Victorian Transmission Plan (see map on page 3). The next step is for the Minister for Energy and Resources to invite another round of feedback for consideration before formally declaring the zone. See page 7 for details.

What is a renewable energy zone?

Renewable energy zones are areas identified as the best places to host wind and solar projects and batteries for storage. In designing these areas we've considered community and industry feedback as well as information about cultural heritage, existing uses of land, and quality of wind and solar energy in the region.

Why do we need renewable energy zones?

Victoria's energy system is changing as coal-fired power stations are becoming unreliable and closing down. VicGrid is working to put in place a long-term plan to deliver the safe, reliable and affordable power Victoria needs to keep the lights on.

Renewable energy zones will:

- unlock new economic benefits for regional communities and Traditional Owners
- limit the need for additional transmission infrastructure
- help set clear expectations for how project developers engage and involve the community
- provide greater certainty about how and where renewables projects should be built.

Six zones have been proposed in regional Victoria. Together, they cover 7.9% of the state's land area, but just a fraction of that will be needed for development – less than 1% of the state's land area.



Have your say

As part of the process for declaring renewable energy zones, the Minister has issued a draft renewable energy zone order for consultation. This offers another chance for people to provide feedback and make submissions to help shape development of the South West Renewable Energy Zone. For more information, see page 7.



South West

It's your choice

Developers must talk to landholders to get permission to build renewable generation projects (such as wind turbines, large scale solar farms or batteries) on their land. Landholders can choose whether or not to host a project.

Landholders who do host renewable generation projects will receive financial payments and economic and other benefits that they negotiate with the developer. Projects will also be required to share economic and other benefits with the whole community and meet 48 expectations under the Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines, which are currently being finalised.



The draft South West Renewable Energy Zone

The draft South West Renewable Energy Zone includes parts of the Moyne and Southern Grampians local government areas. Small parts of the zone also sit within Glenelg, Corangamite and West Wimmera local government areas.

The zone has 2 sections – one south-east of Hamilton between Macarthur and Darlington, and one north-west of Hamilton between Casterton and Balmoral.

The south-east section sits within the Registered Aboriginal Party boundaries of Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. The north-west section sits within the boundaries of Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.

It is important to note that this zone has been split into two sections in response to feedback about potential impacts on agricultural land and environmental and cultural values south-west of Hamilton, and calls for land near Coleraine to be considered for inclusion.

While the sections are separate, they are both part of the draft South West Renewable Energy Zone.

How much new energy are we planning for in the draft South West Renewable Energy Zone?

Once renewable energy zones are declared, VicGrid proposes to run a competitive allocation process to decide which projects in each zone have the authority to connect the energy they produce to the grid.

We will consider:

- the amount of electricity Victoria needs to generate to meet expected demand as outlined in the Victorian Transmission Plan
- ensuring the level of development inside each zone can be supported by available transmission lines
- the density of projects within each renewable energy zone
- how development can be coordinated to avoid the 'spaghetti effect' of many powerlines crossing the landscape
- whether developers are meeting expectations for landholder, community and Traditional Owner engagement and social value and economic benefits.

This will ensure we ultimately produce enough energy to meet demand while also considering the impact on communities, Traditional Owners, agriculture and the environment.

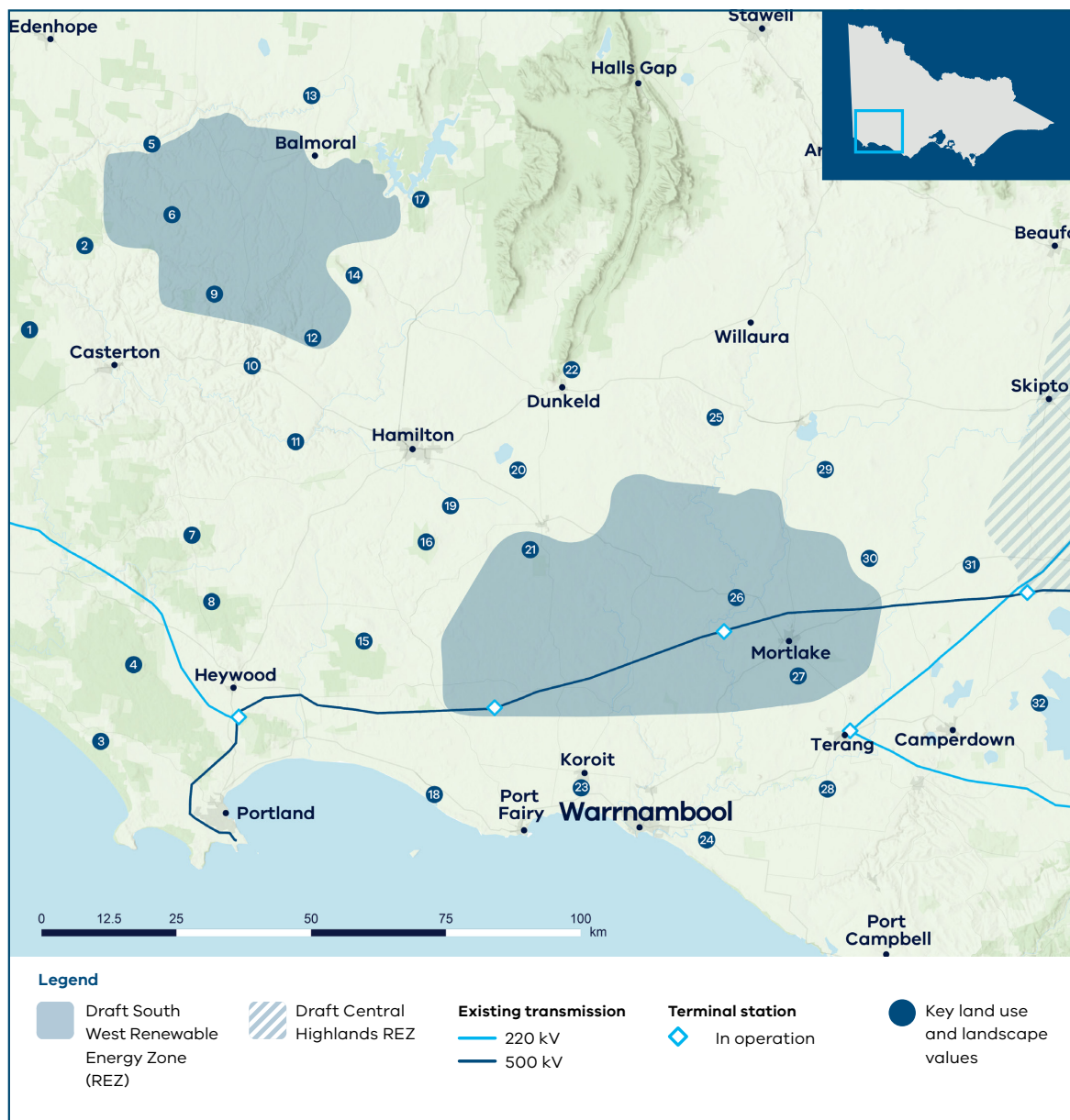
We are proposing to set access limits for each zone at the maximum amount that can be managed by the planned build-out of the transmission network.

This is not the level of development people should expect in each zone but is the maximum that the transmission network could support within the zone.

How to read the map

The map on this page shows the draft South West Renewable Energy Zone, including some of the significant land use and landscape values that influenced its location, size and shape. The identified values in the region are a sub-set only and are not exhaustive of the values present. For detailed descriptions of the labelled land use and landscape values, see page 4.

The draft South West Renewable Energy Zone



Key land use and landscape values

- 1 Biodiversity/cultural:** Roseneath, Nangeela and Drajurk state forests, home to native flora and fauna
- 2 Biodiversity/cultural:** Brimboal State Forest, home to native flora and fauna
- 3 Biodiversity/community/cultural:** Discovery Bay Coastal Park
- 4 Biodiversity/cultural/community:** Cobboboonee and Lower Glenelg National Parks
- 5 Biodiversity/cultural:** Glenelg river and surrounding areas of sensitivity
- 6 Biodiversity/cultural:** Chetwynd River and Wando River and surrounding areas of sensitivity
- 7 Biodiversity:** State parks and forests, home to native flora and fauna
- 8 Bushfire risk:** Higher bushfire risk across parks and forested areas
- 9 Agriculture:** Area of higher timber production across the centre of the REZ, surrounded predominantly by livestock grazing across the REZ to the south east and north
- 10 Community/agriculture:** Area of higher aggregated dwelling density around Coleraine, with a high proportion of cropping surrounding the south of Coleraine
- 11 Biodiversity/cultural:** Wannon River and surrounding areas of sensitivity, including scattered protected biodiversity areas
- 12 Biodiversity/cultural:** Higher value biodiversity and cultural values associated with waterways (creeks)
- 13 Mining:** Mining licence and minerals retention licence, including heavy mineral sands deposits
- 14 Biodiversity/cultural/community:** Dundas Range Scenic Reserve, including protected biodiversity area for native flora and fauna
- 15 Cultural heritage:** Budj Bim World Heritage Cultural Landscape
- 16 Biodiversity/cultural:** Mount Napier State Park, including protected biodiversity area
- 17 Biodiversity/cultural:** Multiple State Forests, home to native flora and fauna
- 18 Community/biodiversity/cultural:** Coastal parks, reserves and tourism sites
- 19 Biodiversity:** Public Conservation and Resource Zone Area
- 20 Biodiversity/cultural:** Lake Linlithgow and surrounding lakes, home to native flora and fauna including brolga flocking area
- 21 Cultural:** Western volcanic cones and lava flows from Mount Rouse
- 22 Cultural/biodiversity/community:** The Grampians (Gariwerd Cultural Landscape) – significant landform and landscape with high cultural, community and biodiversity values, including significant viewpoints of the region
- 23 Biodiversity/cultural:** Tower Hill Wildlife Reserve, home to native flora and fauna
- 24 Land use:** Wind farm prohibition area within 5 km of the coast east of Warrnambool (Victorian Planning Provisions)
- 25 Mining:** Retention licence
- 26 Biodiversity/cultural:** Hopkins River and surrounding areas of sensitivity
- 27 Agriculture:** High agricultural productivity dairy farming area with relatively lower compatibility with renewables
- 28 Agriculture:** High productivity dairy farming area with relatively lower compatibility with renewables
- 29 Biodiversity/cultural:** Lake Bolac and surrounding wetlands and reserves, home to native flora and fauna including brolgas
- 30 Biodiversity:** Brolga flocking area*
- 31 Biodiversity/cultural:** Wetlands and volcanic landscape around Mount Elephant
- 32 Biodiversity/cultural:** Western District Lakes Ramsar-listed wetlands, home to native flora and fauna including brolgas

*The Brolga is listed as an endangered under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1998 (Vic)* and is at high risk of extinction in Victoria. Brolga flocking areas are areas mapped by DEECA which provide important Brolga habitat for Brolgas to drink, roost and feed during drier months until breeding. DEECA's Handbook for the Development of Renewable Energy Facilities includes specific guidance for wind facilities and the Victorian Brolga, including avoiding Brolga flocking areas.

Acting on community feedback

Community and industry views have been crucial to the design of the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan.

VicGrid's role is to balance the need for new renewable projects that will deliver reliable and affordable power as coal closes with a range of other factors, including how we minimise impacts on landholders, communities, agriculture, the environment and power bills.

Not all community or industry requests have been adopted. The Victorian Transmission Plan reflects difficult choices, made by weighing up many factors to deliver a plan that best serves all Victorians.

We have used the feedback received during engagement on the renewable energy zone study area and draft Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines in 2024 and again during engagement on the draft Victorian Transmission Plan in 2025 to shape the size and location of the renewable energy zone.

What we heard



- Consideration needs to be given to the significant role this region has already played in Victoria's energy transition so far, noting the large number of uncoordinated existing and proposed local renewable projects.
- Minimise cumulative impacts of wind projects, particularly on visual amenity and how overdevelopment affects peoples' sense of place and way of life.
- Minimise impacts on agriculture, particularly dairy farmland, in recognition of the sector's contribution to the local economy and food security.
- Protect biodiversity, including the brolga and southern bent-wing bat.
- Avoid the north-west portion of the draft proposed renewable energy zone due to ground water access and associated agricultural productivity, areas of environmental and cultural significance, less access to reliable wind and lack of developer interest.
- Consider including land near Coleraine in the zone.

What we did



- Worked to avoid agricultural land, including concentrated dairy farming areas.
- We protected significant landscapes and landforms, including Budj Bim World Heritage Site, the Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park, Lake Corangamite, Great Otway National Park and coastal areas.
- We protected the habitat of species such as the brolga, especially areas with a high concentration of wetlands to the east and north-east of the draft proposed renewable energy zone.
- We adjusted the shape of the draft proposed zone, removing the area south-west of Hamilton and an area of brolga flocking grounds south of Dunkeld that would have restricted planning of new wind turbines.
- We added a new stand-alone section of the zone near Coleraine that offers access to stronger wind than the area removed.



Transmission network upgrades

The 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan also proposes 7 transmission infrastructure investment programs needed over 2025-2040, to enable development of renewable energy zones and offshore wind energy.

The programs include 4 new transmission projects: a Gippsland offshore wind transmission stage 2 project, a new line between Tarrone in South West Victoria and Sydenham in Melbourne's north, a new line between

Truganina and Deer Park in Melbourne, and an additional short line between Hazelwood and Yallourn in Gippsland. The other projects across the 7 programs range from augmentations within existing terminal stations to significant reconstruction of existing transmission lines.

Learn more about the transmission projects in the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan at vicgrid.com.au

What will it be like living in a renewable energy zone?

If you live in or near a renewable energy zone, over time you will see more development of renewable energy generation and storage. You can choose whether or not to host new renewable energy such as wind turbines, solar farms or batteries on your property. It's your decision and we encourage you to talk to your neighbours about it.

Existing planning and environment controls will still apply. All proposed projects will continue to be subject to the planning and environmental approval processes under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and *Environment Effects Act 1978*.

VicGrid will work with developers to coordinate new development and associated transmission to minimise impacts on landscapes and the environment. Only a small proportion of land in a renewable energy zone will be needed for development.

You will also see new community and regional economic benefits delivered over time as part of the Victorian Government's new Renewable Energy Zone Community Benefits Plan. This new approach will feature:

- the introduction of new Renewable Energy Zone Community Energy Funds to benefit regional and rural communities

- payments for landholders who host transmission
- guidance for payments for significantly impacted neighbours of new transmission
- a commitment to co-design a new approach to economic benefits for Traditional Owners.

Renewable Energy Zone Community Energy Funds are an opportunity to invest directly in projects that improve local outcomes and create social value and economic benefits for communities in regions hosting energy infrastructure.

Local decision-making that responds to local needs and priorities will be a cornerstone of these funds and decisions about investments will be made in consultation with regional community reference groups with broad community and industry representation.

In addition to government initiatives, developers of projects will be required to implement their own community benefits programs.

The final Renewable Energy Zone Community Benefits Plan is set to be released in 2026. Learn more at engage.vic.gov.au/vtif-rez-community-benefits

Have your say

The Minister for Energy and Resources has released a draft South West Renewable Energy Zone order for consultation.

The order sets out a map of the zone, transmission projects to enable the zone, and the intended hosting capacity that the planned transmission network could support in the zone.

In this round of consultation, we are seeking any significant new information about sensitive areas, potential impacts or areas that are suitable for development that we may have missed in planning the zone.

Feedback will be considered as part of the declaration process and will also continue to shape decisions as we develop the 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan.

The public is invited to make a submission on the draft renewable energy zone order.

Submissions close on 22 February 2026.

To find out more and provide feedback:



Visit Engage Victoria

engage.vic.gov.au/renewable-energy-zone-orders



Call or email us

Call us on **1800 418 341** or email enquiries@vicgrid.com.au

Contact us



Phone: 1800 418 341

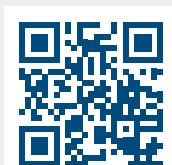
Email: enquiries@vicgrid.com.au

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Disclaimer: The information in this document is current at the time of printing, may be subject to change and should not be relied upon. Please visit vicgrid.com.au for the latest updates.



9.4 Ministerial Planning Permit Application PA2503700 – Mumblin Wind Farm

Directorate: Sustainable Development

Author: Andrew Nield, Manager Regulatory Services

Executive Summary

In Victoria, any proposal to construct, extend or operate a wind farm requires a planning permit from the Minister for Planning. Such applications are processed on behalf of the Minister for Planning by the Department of Transport and Planning.

Under the Planning and Environment Act 1987, the Minister for Planning must consult with Corangamite Shire Council on all planning applications that apply to or may materially affect land within its municipal district.

The Minister for Planning has consulted the Council in respect of Ministerial Planning Permit Application PA2503700 for a proposed wind farm development on land at Curdies-Leichfield Road, Elingamite North, approximately 8 km southwest of Cobden. Council officers have reviewed the application documentation and recommend that Council object to the proposed wind farm.

Recommendation

That Council object to the Mumblin Wind Farm Planning Permit Application PA2503700 in accordance with matters raised in this report and authorise the CEO to make a submission to the Minister for Planning.

Discussion/Key Matters

Background

An application has been submitted to the Minister for Planning (the 'Responsible Authority') for use and development of land for the Mumblin Wind Farm (hereinafter referred to as the 'proposed development').

The application has been submitted by Mumblin Wind Farm Pty Ltd, a special purpose project company wholly owned by REF Developments Pty Ltd, the registered business name of which is RE Future.

The proposed development will comprise up to eight wind turbines with ground to tip heights ranging from 231 – 252m (depending on configuration), and rotor diameter up to 172m. The operational life of the wind farm is 25 – 30 years, which will be followed by decommissioning.

The turbines will have a combined energy generating capacity of approximately “54 megawatts” (MW). The modelled energy output per year is 190,000 (MWh), which is equivalent to meeting the needs of about 35,000 homes.

Description of the Proposal

The proposed development would comprise eight wind turbines of a three bladed design; with accompanying electrical equipment in the form of transformer and switchgear. The finish is proposed to be in low reflectivity grey paint, which is standard industry practice.

Whilst the specific model of the turbines has yet to be chosen and would be identified post consent, two sizes of turbine are proposed; 231m and 252m as measured to blade tip (above ground level). The Aeronautical Impact Assessment (AIA) dated October 2025 states that the proposed development may not require obstacle lighting to be installed; however, CASA is likely to recommend obstacle lighting due to turbine height.

Each turbine would require foundation support, which would consist of concrete footing measuring approximately 20m x 20m in area, and approximately 3m in depth; apart from a small plinth (4.5m – 5.5m diameter) surrounding the base of the tower the application states these foundations will be covered with topsoil and returned to pasture following completion of construction. A 5.0m wide maintenance path would connect the plinth to either the adjacent access track or crane hard standing area.

Crane hard standing areas would be required to allow for the construction of the turbines. These areas would be required at each wind turbine location; and the hard standing would comprise locally sourced crushed rock over an area of approximately 75m x 50m. The hard standing areas would be retained for the lifetime of the proposal and would be utilised at the point of site restoration.

Access to the proposed development will be provided via four dedicated entrances located to service different parts of the site. Two entrances on Curdies–Leichfield Road will use existing property driveways, while the remaining two will be newly constructed to accommodate oversize and overmass (OSOM) turbine components. Within the development, it is proposed to upgrade/extend internal access tracks approximately 10 kilometres with a trafficable width of 5.5 metres and an overall width of about 7.5 metres including drainage. These tracks will be constructed of locally sourced crushed rock and will remain in place for the life of the wind farm to facilitate ongoing maintenance. Passing bays will be installed at intervals of roughly 600 metres to allow safe movement of maintenance and emergency vehicles.

An onsite substation would be located adjacent to the Curdies-Leichfield Road (southern end of the site) and will house the electrical infrastructure required to connect the wind farm to the electricity grid. It will include a control building and high voltage electrical equipment. The substation will be constructed on a compacted gravel pad. Preliminary plans include fenced enclosures for safety and security.

A wind monitoring mast would be installed on-site, extending up to 140m above ground level. The permanent wind monitoring mast is expected to be of a guyed, narrow lattice or tubular steel design.

The construction of the proposed development would take approximately 12-18 months. The application states a construction environmental management plan would be prepared via a standard permit condition to manage impacts on the environment and amenity values.

Subject Site

The proposed development is located on Curdies–Leichfield Road at Elingamite, approximately 8km south-west of Cobden. The subject site is approximately 1,496 hectares.

Figure 1 shows the proposed development area in context to Cobden.

Figure 2 shows the proposed location of turbines and substation in the context of the broader subject site.

The subject site comprises 27 privately owned parcels and 10 adjoining road reserves. The application states that the land is predominantly used for dairy farming and is highly modified from its natural state, consisting mainly of open pasture paddocks bordered by shelterbelts and intersected by farm tracks. The site is further described as generally flat to gently undulating, with elevations ranging from approximately 125 metres to 138 metres above sea level. Native vegetation is sparse and scattered trees occurring along drainage lines and road reserves. Surrounding land use is consistent with the subject site, being predominately dairy farms, with scattered dams, sheds and rural dwellings present. Lake Elingamite is approximately 2 kilometres to the north east of the site.

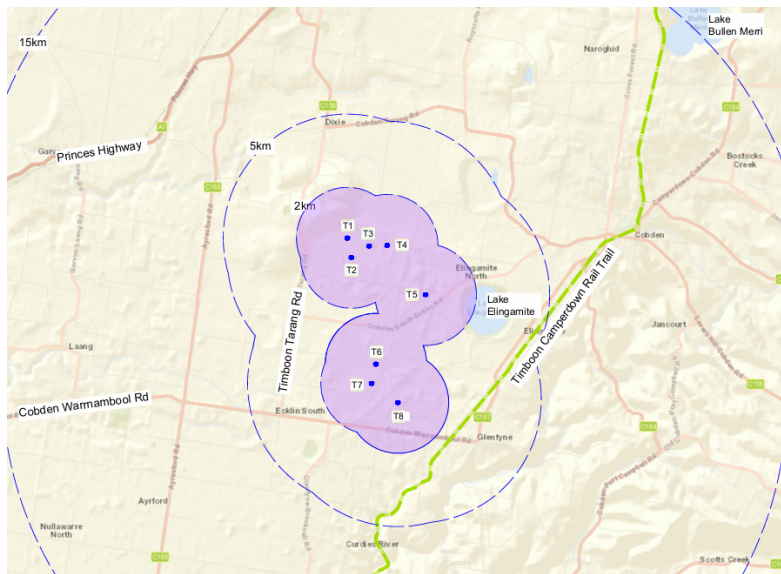


Figure 1 – Proposed Development Locality (Source: *Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, GBD Landscape Architecture*)

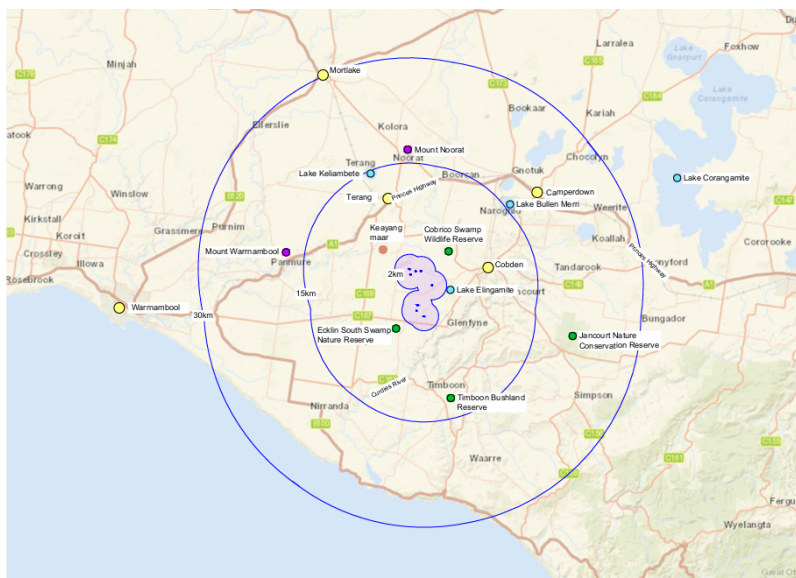


Figure 2 – Proposed Development Regional context (Source: *Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, GBD Landscape Architecture*)

Planning Scheme Requirements

The proposal requires a planning permit under the following clauses of the Corangamite Planning Scheme.

Planning Scheme Clause	Matter for which a Permit is Required
Corangamite Planning Scheme	
35.07-1	Use of land as a wind energy facility and utility installation
35.07-4	Buildings and works for a section 2 use
	Buildings and works within 20m of a road
	Buildings and works within 5m from a boundary
36.04-1	Buildings and works associated with Section 2 Use
52.02-14	Display a business identification sign
52.17-1	Remove, destroy or lop native vegetation, including dead native vegetation
52.29-2	Create or alter access to a road zone in Transport Zone 2
52.32-1	Use and development of the land for a wind energy facility

Applications for wind energy facilities are made to the Minister for Planning, which assumes the role of Responsible Authority for this type of application. Such applications are processed on behalf of the Minister for Planning by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP).

It is noted that the application has been accepted by the Minister for Planning under the Development Facilitation Program (DFP) pathway, which provides an expedited planning process. Applications made under the DFP pathway are not exempt from the public notice and referral requirements of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (unless exempted elsewhere in the planning scheme). However, decisions made by the Minister for Planning under the DFP pathway cannot be appealed to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). In this scenario, Corangamite Shire Council assumes the role of consultee as the local government authority.

The planning application will still be assessed against the provisions of the Corangamite Planning Scheme, with reference to Clause 52.32 Wind Energy Facility and Policy and Planning Guidelines for the Development of Wind Energy Facilities in Victoria (2021). These policies are generally criteria based and address matters including government policy objectives (facilitating wind farms in appropriate locations), amenity of the surrounding area (noise, shadow flicker, electromagnetic interference), landscape and visual impact, biodiversity, aircraft safety, and construction impacts and decommissioning.

Mumblin Wind Farm EPBC Assessment

The proposed development was determined to be a controlled action (EPBC 2024/10068) under section 75 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). One bat species and one bird species listed under the EPBC Act are present in the area:

- Southern Bent-wing Bat - Critically Endangered.
- White throated Needletail – Vulnerable and Migratory.

The planning permit process is accredited to assess impacts on matters of national environmental significance (MNES) under the EPBC Act through the Bilateral agreement made under section 45 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth) relating to environmental assessment (the Bilateral Agreement).

The Minister for Planning has released the draft EPBC assessment documentation for comment in conjunction with the planning permit application. In this scenario, Corangamite Shire Council assumes the role of consultee as the local government authority.

A draft submission has been prepared which sets out a formal response to the Mumblin Wind Farm planning application. It provides a detailed analysis of the proposal and identifies major deficiencies in technical documentation and significant risks relating to land use conflict with state-significant dairy farming, inadequate fire risk assessment, aviation safety concerns, impacts on threatened species and native vegetation, insufficient transport planning, and poor community engagement.

The submission also outlines Council's recommendations for further information to be provided and circulated before any decision is made. If a permit is granted contrary to Council's objection, strict conditions are sought to mitigate these risks.

The draft submission has been circulated to Councillors under separate cover.

Alignment to Council Plan

This report is in keeping with the commitments in the Council Plan 2025-2029:

A growing and prosperous economy

- Support and promote local businesses
- Encourage sustainable agriculture
- Support and enable job creation

Quality infrastructure and community connections

- Improve traffic safety on roads and streets

Protection and enhancement of our Environment

- Support and promote renewable energy
- Adapt and mitigate climate change impacts
- Protect biodiversity and our natural assets

Strong Civic Leadership

- Be financially responsible and sustainable
- Lead by example in response to climate change

Relevant Law/Policy/Legal Implications

Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Act 2017

Planning and Environment Act 1987

Corangamite Planning Scheme

Victorian Planning Provisions

Collaborative Procurement

Nil

Consultation and Engagement

Council has received feedback and letters of concern from affected community members over a significant period of time. Links to information sessions run by the proponents were placed on Council's social media channels and community made aware that the project had been submitted to the Minister for Planning for consideration.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial implications identified for the subject of this report.

Diversity and Inclusion Considerations

Nil

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

Council's Environment and Sustainability Strategy references the aim to move towards net zero emission and being climate resilient. Renewable energy and new energy production, storage and transmission infrastructure is an important part of meeting this aim, however this needs to occur in a planned way acknowledging the impact that these facilities have on other aspects of the environment including endangered flora and fauna, waterways and landforms.

Risk Consideration

This report addresses in part Strategic Enterprise Risk 123 – Council fails to support, protect and advocate for agricultural activity in the region. Making a submission to the Minister for Planning and advocating for the protection of agricultural land is a mitigation measure for this risk. The current risk rating is medium and the residual risk is medium.

Conflict of Interest

No officer involved in the preparation of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Council should make a submission to the Minister for Planning to application for Mumblin Wind Farm in the manner outlined in this report and in the draft submission as attached.

Attachments

1. Under Separate Cover - Submission to Minister for Planning Mumblin Wind Farm [9.4.1 - 25 pages]
2. Under Separate Cover - Appendix B to Attachment 1 - Cobden- Aerodrome- Masterplan [9.4.2 - 112 pages]

9.5 Emergency Management Response and Recovery January 2026 Fires

Directorate: Sustainable Development

Author: Justine Linley, Director Sustainable Development

Executive Summary

On 9 January 2026, widespread lightning activity and extreme fire weather conditions led to the ignition of several significant bushfires across south-western Victoria. Two of these fires directly affected communities within, or immediately adjacent to, Corangamite Shire, requiring rapid coordination across emergency services, Council departments, and local community networks.

The Yalla-Y-Poorra Road fire (also known as Streatham–Skipton fire) originated in neighbouring municipalities but moved rapidly under strong northerly winds and posed substantial risk to the northern parts of the Shire. These fires triggered multiple Watch and Act and Emergency Warning messages across rural localities, with impacts on agricultural operations, transport routes, and essential service continuity. Council's involvement included supporting relief centre activation, providing intelligence on local assets and vulnerable residents, providing plant resources to support response and coordinating with CFA, Department Transport and Planning, Victoria Police and neighbouring councils through the Ararat Incident Control Centre.

Concurrently, a second fire complex emerged in the Otway district, with fires burning in the Carlisle River and Kennedy's Creek areas. Steep topography, heavy fuel loads and variable wind conditions contributed to rapid fire behaviour and difficult suppression operations. Although these communities are located on the Shire's eastern boundary, the event had direct implications for Corangamite residents, farmers, tourism operators, and transport connections through the Otways. Council provided situational support to the Colac Otway ICC, monitored potential impacts to local roads and campgrounds, and prepared for possible escalation requiring relief and recovery activation.

Collectively, these January 2026 fire events highlight the increasing volatility of the region's fire environment and the importance of strong inter-council and cross-agency coordination. This report summarises the operational impacts on Corangamite Shire, Council's actions and responsibilities during the response phase, and early considerations for community recovery and future resilience planning

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Note the report and endorse the actions implemented by the organisation in the response and relief phases of the events;
2. Endorse the draft framework for the development of the Disaster Recovery Plan for the January 2026 Fires;
3. Endorse the submission of funding applications with the State and Federal Governments and philanthropic organisations for relief and recovery programs as they arise;
4. Write to the Premier and relevant Ministers to advocate for immediate reduction or removal of regulatory red tape to enable on farm remediation and recovery works to occur, for housing for displaced residents and workers to be provided and for funding directly to fire-affected residents and businesses;
5. Write to the Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Local Government advocating for additional funding support for fire-affected landowners including 100% rate relief for the 2025-2026 financial year; and
6. Record a vote of thanks to the emergency services personnel, community volunteers and workers who have worked tirelessly in the response, relief and recovery in both the Skipton-Streatham and Otways fires.

Discussion/Key Matters/Issues

Chronology of Events – January 2026 Bushfires

This following is a summary of key events relating to the Yalla-Y-Poora / Streatham–Skipton fires and the Otways (Carlisle River–Kennedy’s Creek) fires, as they unfolded between 9–15 January 2026. All information is drawn from official emergency updates and media reporting.

Thursday 8 January 2026 – Declaration of Catastrophic Fire Day

- Catastrophic Fire Day and Total Fire Ban declared for Friday 9 January.

Friday 9 January 2026 – Ignition and Rapid Escalation

- At approximately 1:30pm, a fast-moving grassfire ignited 5 km north of Streatham between Yalla-Y-Poora Road and Eurambeen–Streatham Road, driven by catastrophic fire weather and winds exceeding 80 km/h.
- The fire rapidly travelled in a south east direction through Carranballac before a wind change pushed the fire east along the Glenelg Highway, impacting areas south of Skipton.

- VIC Emergency issued Evacuate Immediately warnings for Carranballac, Skipton, Streatham and Vite Vite North, with the fire expected to reach Skipton by 4:30pm.
- An Emergency Recovery Centre is established at Beaufort.
- A predicted 3:00pm wind change does not occur until later in the afternoon, producing unpredictable fire behaviour and significantly challenging suppression efforts.
- Multiple fires ignite in the Otways due to a weather front with dry lightning.
- The broader State experiences more than 200 fires, with 11 escalating to major incidents, intensifying pressure on emergency resources.

Saturday 10 January 2026 – Otways Fire Complex Intensifies

- Multiple out-of-control bushfires burn across the Otway Ranges, including at Carlisle River and Kennedys Creek, prompting widespread Leave Immediately and Take Shelter Now warnings.
- Residents in communities such as Gellibrand, Forrest, Yeodene and Kennedys Creek are urged to evacuate as fire behaviour escalates.
- The Great Ocean Road is closed between Apollo Bay and Lavers Hill due to multiple active fire fronts.
- In western Victoria, at least five structures are confirmed lost in the Streatham fire area, with significant agricultural impacts also reported.

Sunday 11 January 2026 – Continued Emergency Warnings

- Firefighting operations continue across the Otways and western districts under volatile wind conditions.
- Air quality deteriorates significantly across western Victoria due to persistent smoke and ash dispersal from multiple firegrounds.

Monday 12 January 2026 – Containment Efforts and Ongoing Restrictions

Streatham–Skipton Fireground

- The grassfire reaches 19,300 hectares and is declared contained, though areas including Carranballac, Stoneleigh and rural Skipton remain Not Safe to Return due to hazardous trees and damaged power infrastructure.
- Extensive road closures continue, including the Glenelg Highway, Eurambeen–Streatham Road and Lismore–Skipton Road.

Otways (Carlisle River–Kennedys Creek)

- A Watch & Act message remains active for Irrewillipe, Barongarook, Kewar, Carlisle River and Kennedys Creek, with the fire still not under control and travelling from Trotters Lane toward Bungador.
- Relief and information centres operate at the Colac Showgrounds and COPACC (Colac Performing Arts and Cultural Centre).
- The Great Ocean Road reopens with restrictions

Statewide Situation

- 27 active fires burning across the state, with approximately 400,000ha burnt this fire season
- More than 350 structures are confirmed destroyed across Victoria, including 59 structures attributed to the Streatham fire.

Tuesday 13 January 2026 – Return Permissions and State Declaration

- CFA updates confirm that it is safe for residents to return to Carranballac, Streatham and rural Skipton, with restricted access via traffic management points.
- Community meetings are held in Beaufort, Streatham and Skipton to support local recovery and information sharing.
- A State of Disaster is declared across 18 fire-affected municipalities, enabling enhanced powers for evacuations and movement control.

14–15 January 2026 – Otways Fire Containment

- A Community Information release confirms the Carlisle River (Kennedys Creek) fire is now under control and contained, though hazardous tree assessment and road closures remain in effect.
- Smoke and flame visibility is expected to continue for several days as crews work to secure the fireground.
- A transition to recovery plan for the Streatham-Skipton Fires was approved on 14 January. This is the official transfer of responsibility from response agencies to recovery agencies, including councils.

Streatham – Skipton Fire (Yalla Y Poora Fire)

Impact Summary at transition from the ICC to Recovery

- The fire was contained east/south east of Skipton at 9.40 am on Sunday 11 January.
- Burn area of approximately 20,000 hectares in the municipalities of Ararat Rural City, Corangamite Shire and Pyrenees Shire, and covering Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung Country.
- 20 initial impact assessments completed (59 structures impacts of which 15 houses uninhabitable)
- Approximately 21,000 animals impacted in the area with estimated loss of stock ranging from 700 – 10,000 (yet to be confirmed)
- Powercor completed core infrastructure assessments and repair with minor clean up and private connections remaining.

Council's recovery team has conducted initial outreach and Secondary Impact Assessments at affected properties. To date, a total of 34 properties in Corangamite Shire are known to have been directly impacted. There was one dwelling lost. At least 4 sheds have been confirmed lost or significantly damaged. There has been significant fencing and livestock losses which is yet to be quantified, as well as loss of agricultural machinery and other infrastructure such as water tanks, pipes and troughs, feed, storage and stock containment areas.

Recovery Hub

The Recovery Hub opened on Sunday 11 January, located at the Skipton Hall, 5 Anderson Street Skipton. The Recovery Hub was open 10 am to 4 pm Sunday to Saturday in the first week.

A number of agencies were represented at the Hub in addition to staff from both Corangamite and Pyrenees Shires.

Approximately 500 people attended the Hub from 11 January to 19th January 2026.

A community meeting was held on Saturday 10 January 2026 at the Skipton Mechanics Institute Hall attended by over 100 people. A second community meeting was held on Tuesday 13 January 2026 which was attended by a similar number of people.

Recovery Outreach & Coordination

Council's recovery team is conducting outreach to affected residents to understand their needs and connect them with relevant supports and services. This includes the coordination of various recovery services, such as financial assistance, counselling, fencing support, water relief, and waste collection in partnership with support agencies. Council is responsible for providing water relief and waste collection services during recovery.

Funding and Recovery Support

There are a number of other funding programs announced since the commencement of the fires on 9 January 2026. Officers have been collating a list of those funds and other supports as they become available and details are included on the Council's website with links to external agencies [Skipton Fire Recovery 2026 - Corangamite Shire](#)

This information and assistance to complete applications for funding provided at the Skipton Recovery Hub.

Advocacy

Council has met with numerous elected representatives, government departments and agencies to advocate for the recovery needs of Skipton and district and to raise awareness of the potential impacts from the Otway Fires.

In Skipton, the Mayor, Councillors, Community members and officers met with Minister Lily D'Ambrosio on 12 January 2026.

On 13 January, the Mayor, Councillors, Community Members, councillors from Pyrenees and Ararat and officers and met with Deputy Premier Ben Carroll MP, Martha Haylett MP - Member for Ripon, Beverley McArthur MP - Member for Western Victoria, and Danny O'Brien MP, Leader of the Nationals.

On 14 January, the Mayor met with Dan Tehan MP – Member for Wannon to look at the impacts of the Otways Fires and also travelling to Skipton and Streatham.

The CEO and officers have continued to meet with State Government Departmental Executives and Officers to progress funding applications and advocate for improved support for fire affected communities and for the organisations supporting them.

The following advocacy priorities were raised through discussion with affected community members:

- Red tape reduction/removal for funding application support and for bushfire remediation and infrastructure works (e.g. tree/fence removal and reinstatement)
- Childcare and support for families with children impacted by the event
- Housing for workers and displaced community members
- Water for stock and domestic, including cleaning of tanks, refill of dams/tanks, replacement of burnt water infrastructure
- First aid and personal protective equipment and supplies, clothing and clean-up equipment
- Access for insurance assessors to go on property, and assistance in navigating insurance claim processes
- Financial support and recognition from Government that multiple natural disasters compounded by drought, has resulted in significant set backs for farm businesses
- Understanding from Government of the processes of farming specific to this district and acknowledgement that this fire will mean that for many farm businesses there will be no paycheck, no income, for another year.
- Local arrangements where donations of money and goods can be made to ensure that the funds raised are kept within the district.

Otways Fires

Following multiple lightning strikes across the south west on 9 January 2026, the Otway Ranges experienced a major bushfire emergency involving multiple fast-moving fires around Carlisle River, Kennedys Creek, Irrewillipe, Barongarook, Gellibrand, and nearby localities. Extreme weather, heavy fuel loads, and unpredictable winds created dangerous and volatile conditions, prompting rapid escalation and broad-scale emergency warnings.

The Otways fire complex burned a substantial area across the Carlisle River and Kennedys Creek districts, with confirmed fire footprints of 2,347 hectares at Kennedys Creek and 1,288 hectares at Carlisle River, totalling 3,635 hectares of directly affected land.

Summary of event and impacts

- On 10 January 2026 two out-of-control fires burn across the Otways, including major fronts near Carlisle River and Kennedys Creek, triggering Leave Immediately and Take Shelter Now warnings.
- Fires travel rapidly from Trotters Lane (Carlisle River) toward Larpent, and from Sandy Ridge Track near Cape Otway toward communities on the forest edge.
- Smoke spreads across the Surf Coast and Greater Geelong, with multiple Otway communities placed on high alert.
- Evacuation orders are issued for an extended area including Carlisle River, Kennedys Creek, Irrewillipe, Barongarook, Tomahawk Creek, Lavers Hill, and surrounding districts including Simpson.

Community and Business Impacts

- Residents advised to evacuate immediately, with welfare support activated at the Colac Showgrounds and Colac Performing Arts and Cultural Centre (COPACC).
- The Great Ocean Road closes between Apollo Bay and Lavers Hill due to dangerous fire activity, limiting access for firefighters and cutting off communities.
- Significant smoke impacts affect vulnerable populations across Colac Otway and neighbouring municipalities including communities in Corangamite.
- On 14–15 January 2026, the Carlisle River–Kennedys Creek fire is declared under control and contained, following several days of heavy-machinery, ground-crew, and aircraft operations.
- Hazardous tree risks, damaged roads, and residual smoke persist, keeping some roads closed and delaying re-entry and impacting on dairy farms in both the Colac Otway and Corangamite Shires bordering the fire ground.
- Loss of power and telecommunications impacted on emergency messaging and communication with affected residents, businesses and tourists.

- Loss of power has resulted in loss of stock, food and dairy products.
- Council officers have made contact with businesses in Simpson, Princetown, Port Campbell and surrounds. Tourism businesses are reporting increase in cancellations.
- Mayor has visited the Simpson CFA and spoken with community members and emergency services personnel and volunteers.

Draft Disaster Recovery Plan preparation

The draft framework for the Disaster Recovery Plan is based on the guidance and advice provided by Emergency Management Victoria and draws upon some best practice examples of effective Recovery Plans from other councils in the State who have implemented disaster recovery and community recovery plans, particularly relating to fire. Officers are also using information and processes developed as part of the response and recovery activities from the 2018 St Patricks Day fires as well as recovery activities from the 2011 and 2022 Skipton Floods.

Additional resources will be required for the 18 month period required to develop and implement the Plan, however, it is proposed that the work be done undertaken internally in collaboration with Ararat and Pyrenees staff and in consultation with the Community and Business Recovery Steering Committee. This is to ensure that the connection with community is maintained and the foundation principles of recovery followed.

The Disaster Recovery Plan will include:

- Recovery Team Structure
- Resource and staffing requirements
- Community and Business Recovery Committee – membership and Terms of Reference
- GANNT chart of outcomes, tasks/actions, accountability, timeframe for delivery
- Secondary Impact Assessments and Actions
- Collaboration protocols
- Funding and Donations
- Community support requirements
- Business support requirements (including farm and agri-business supports)
- Events
- Communications including stakeholder engagement and advocacy
- Probity, governance and risk management
- Evaluation, review and reporting
- Authorisations/sign off procedures

Options for Council Consideration

Council may wish to consider bringing in an external team or consultancy to develop and implement the Recovery Plan. This may alleviate pressure on ongoing Council business operations, however, it has the risk of disconnecting Council from those in the community most affected.

Alignment to Council Plan

This report is in keeping with the commitments in the Council Plan 2025-2029:

A Community that enables healthy, active, and resilient living

Enable, advocate and where responsible deliver improved amenity and public safety

A growing and prosperous economy

Support and promote local businesses

Encourage sustainable agriculture

Explore ways to reduce red tape for our community

Quality infrastructure and community connections

Maintain and upgrade our infrastructure

Protection and enhancement of our Environment

Enhance community resilience to emergencies

Protect biodiversity and our natural assets

Strong Civic Leadership

Support volunteers and community leaders

Relevant Law/Policy/Legal Implications

- *Emergency Management Act 2013*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*
- Declaration of an Emergency of State Significance
- Corangamite Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2024-2027
- Otway District Relief and Recovery Collaboration – Municipal Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan 2023
- Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (Australian Government)

Collaborative Procurement

Nil

Consultation and Engagement

Councillors and Community have been informed in the leadup to the fire events and throughout. Council's Communications team implemented just-in-time social media messaging picking up and relaying VicEmergency Messaging and Warnings. A dedicated webpage has been developed and a weekly newsletter has been issued jointly with the Pyrenees Shire. The first newsletter was distributed on Friday 16 January 2026 with subsequent newsletters to be distributed weekly on a Wednesday.

Frequent Situation Reports were produced for Councillors and the Executive Leadership Team during the fire events, reducing to twice weekly updates in the first week of the Recovery transition from 19 January 2026.

A joint Community Recovery Steering Committee between Ararat, Pyrenees and Corangamite has been formed and with an inception meeting scheduled for Thursday 22 January 2026. The community and business Recovery Plans will be discussed and developed in consultation with that committee and other stakeholders. Community consultation will be ongoing throughout the development and delivery of the Disaster Recovery Plan and any sub-plans.

Financial Considerations

There are a number of financial implications arising from the Fire events of January 2026. Council has implemented the Corangamite Municipal Emergency Management Plan and the Otway District Relief and Recovery Collaboration setting up and staffing Emergency Management coordination during the events and establishing Recovery Teams. The early estimate of initial response and recovery is in the order of \$500,000. The full cost of recovery is yet to be determined once secondary impact assessments are completed but is envisaged to be in the order of \$1.5 Million for public assets and significantly higher for private assets.

Disaster Recovery Planning is now underway and it is envisaged that specialist staff will be required to support the recovery for a period of 18 months. Application has been made for State and Federal funding for these activities as the funding streams are announced. This includes assistance to be provided from the Australian Government's Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) and the Council Support Fund. Council has submitted an intent to claim under the NDRRA with an indicative claim figure of \$1.5M. An initial allocation of \$750,000 has been provided as part of the Council Support Fund (Funding Agreement Corangamite CSF AGRN 1242). ERV has indicated that there will likely be funding available through their Community Recovery Hubs program for Recovery Officer resourcing and recovery activities.

Financial implications for business and community are significant. Agriculture and associated supply chain businesses represent 37% of the economic output and employment in the Skipton and surrounds Statistical Local Area (SLA). There are significant economic implications for the Skipton and district community with the fire compounding two years of drought and coming in the midst of harvest. Some large farm businesses have upwards of 80% of operational property, storage, machinery and equipment destroyed separate to stock and fodder loss.

In addition to remediation and recovery funding requirements for farm-based and agri-businesses, a pressing concern from directly fire-affected landowners is the payment of rates for the 2025-2026 financial year. Taking into account the 40% drought concession that has already been applied, an amount of \$126,000 would be required if Council were to waive 100% of the rates for only those properties directly impacted by fire in the Corangamite Shire. The impact on the rates income for Pyrenees and Ararat landholders is not known, however, the concerns have been raised with those respective councils. It is proposed that Council advocate for funding to cover a full rate waiver for those landholders burnt in the 2026 fire events.

Diversity and Inclusion Considerations

The Recovery Plan and operations of the Recovery Hub are in accordance with Council's Access and Inclusion Plan and respectful of the diversity and individual requirements, including the right to privacy, confidentiality and safety for those accessing the services and supports provided.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

There is likely to be significant environmental impacts from the fires including loss of native vegetation and wildlife, erosion and waterway pollution. The Community and Business Recovery Plan will consider actions around restoration of the natural environment.

Risk Consideration

This report covers the following Enterprise Risks:

- Enterprise Risk 124 – Strategic Risk – Emergency Management planning is ineffective
- Enterprise Risk 15 – As a result of a major fire/flood not being managed effectively, environmental damage occurs and lives are lost.

The risk mitigation and management strategies for both risks have been applied. One of the significant mitigation measures is advocacy for funding and resourcing support from State and Federal Governments. The Mayor, Councillors and CEO have been involved in direct advocacy to local, state and federal Members of Parliament and senior Departmental staff throughout the event. It is proposed that this advocacy continue.

The current risk rating is high and residual risk rating medium.

Conflict of Interest

No officer involved in the preparation of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Attachments

Nil

9.6 Tiny Towns Round Three Grant Opportunity

Directorate: Sustainable Development

Author: Katy McMahon, Manager Economy & Prosperity

Executive Summary

The Tiny Towns funding program Round Three is open for applications. An application for Timboon Precinct Plan Phase 1 Implementation is proposed.

Recommendation

That Council authorise lodgement of Tiny Towns Round Three funding application for Timboon Precinct Plan Phase 1 Implementation.

Discussion/Key Matters/Issues

Tiny Towns is a Regional Development Victoria (RDV) funding program that is now in its third round. The focus of the program is to support community-driven projects that enhance small towns, strengthen community connections and encourage more visitors.

Council has been successful in receiving funding in rounds one and two being:

- Camperdown: Botanic Garden: garden pathway upgrade
- Cobden: Tandarook Park Restoration Stage Three
- Skipton: Jubilee Park Toilet Upgrade
- Lismore: Browns Waterhole Footbridge Replacement

Council has also assisted, through letters of support, application assistance or auspicing a number of community led applications.

Applications for round three close 4 February, 2026. This round is similar to the previous two rounds but does include some additional guidelines such as sporting facilities infrastructure projects being ineligible and a maximum funding of \$50,000 per town limit (in the form of one project or multiple projects that combined do not exceed \$50,000). Funding requirements include:

- Minimum project funding of \$5,000 and maximum project funding of \$50,000.
- Co-contribution of 25% of the total project budget required which must be cash co-contributions (cannot include in-kind for council led applications).

Informal feedback from RDV Officers indicates this will be a highly competitive round with a desire to ensure a geographic spread of the funding allocation.

It is proposed to submit an application for Round Three of the Tiny Towns Fund for the Timboon Precinct Plan Phase 1 Implementation including: shade cover, wayfinding and signage, bike racks and charging points.

Options for Council Consideration

Council may resolve to lodge an application to the Tiny Towns Round Three fund for Timboon Precinct Plan Phase 1 Implementation. Alternatively, Council may decline to make an application to the fund.

Alignment to Council Plan

This report is in keeping with the commitments in the Council Plan 2025-2029:

A growing and prosperous economy

- Enhance and promote tourism opportunities

Quality infrastructure and community connections

- Maintain and upgrade our infrastructure

- Provide and promote walking and cycling infrastructure

Strong Civic Leadership

- Engage community members in meaningful and accessible ways including our youth and young adults, and older members of the community

- Be financially responsible and sustainable

Relevant Law/Policy/Legal Implications

The Timboon Precinct Plan was adopted by Council in August 2024. The proposed funding application implements a number of the plans recommendations as part of Phase 1 implementation.

Collaborative Procurement

Nil

Consultation and Engagement

The Timboon Precinct Plan was informed by significant community input. Councillors and the Executive Leadership Team have been consulted during December 2025 briefing meetings regarding options for funding applications alongside discussions with relevant council teams.

Financial Considerations

Council's 2025-2026 budget includes \$25,000 for implementation of the Timboon Precinct Plan. This has been partially used to fund the Expression of Interest for the Timboon Power Street Building Activation and would also be used for any required planning scheme amendment implementation costs.

Estimated costs for the proposed Phase 1 implementation project are budgeted at \$67,000. This consists of a \$50,000 grant funding and a \$17,000 Council contribution. The \$17,000 Council contribution would be drawn from the remaining funds from the 2025-2026 precinct plan implementation budget and if additional funding is required form part of a budget initiative bid for 2026-2027.

Diversity and Inclusion Considerations

The project proposes implementation of elements within the Timboon Precinct Plan which is underpinned by seven overarching design principles including:

- Develop an Accessible and Thriving Destination for Everyone
- Prioritise Accessibility, Walking and Cycling to create an Inclusive Space
- Support Inclusive, Intergenerational Connections
- Support an Inclusive and Prosperous Future for All

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

The project proposes implementation of elements within the Timboon Precinct Plan including shade installations, bike racks and e-bike charging contributing to the active transport opportunities across the shire.

Risk Consideration

The Tiny Towns fund is a competitive funding program, as such a risk for consideration is an unsuccessful grant application. If the application is unsuccessful the project will need to be deferred until sufficient funding is secured.

Conflict of Interest

No officer involved in the preparation of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Attachments

1. Tiny Towns Round 3 Grant Guidelines [9.6.1 - 15 pages]



Tiny Towns Fund

Fund Guidelines for Round 3

Message from the Minister for Regional Development	2
1 Fund Overview	2
1.1 About the Fund	2
1.2 Fund Objectives	3
1.3 Fund Outcomes	3
2 Grant Funding.....	3
2.1 Co-contribution requirements	3
2.2 In-kind contributions	4
2.3 Project budgets and co-contributions	4
2.4 Example project budgets	5
3 Applicant Eligibility	5
3.1 Eligible Applicants	5
3.2 Eligible entity types	6
3.3 Auspice arrangements	6
3.4 Ineligible Applicants	6
4 Eligible Project locations	7
5 What will be funded	7
5.1 Eligible Activities and Expenses	7
5.2 Ineligible Activities and Expenses	8
5.3 Costings of expenses and GST	9
5.4 Project Timeline	9
6 Key Dates	9
7 Applications	9
7.1 Preparing an application	10
7.2 Documentation and Information Requirements	10
8 Assessment	11
8.1 Assessment criteria	11
8.2 Applicant checks	13
9 Conditions of Funding.....	13
9.1 Publicity/acknowledgement of support.....	14
9.2 Program Surveys	14
10 Privacy Statement	14
11 Terms of Applying	14
11.1 Department Probity and Decision Making	14
11.2 Complaints and feedback	15
11.3 Conflict of interest.....	15
11.4 Information only.....	15
Appendix 1 – Eligible locations	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Appendix 2 – Contact details	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Message from the Minister for Regional Development

I am pleased to launch Round 3 of the Victorian Government's Tiny Towns Fund. An initial commitment of \$10 million for the Fund was made in the 2023-24 State Budget. Through the \$2 billion Regional Package, a further \$10 million was committed to the Fund, providing a total of \$20 million over four years beginning in the 2023-24 financial year.

The Fund will support communities of up to 5,000 people in the 48 local government areas in regional Victoria, Alpine Resorts, and the 10 interface local government areas of Casey, Hume, Cardinia, Melton, Mitchell, Mornington Peninsula, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Wyndham and the Yarra Ranges.

A key objective of the Tiny Towns Fund is to increase liveability, opportunity and prosperity by delivering better public places and spaces in these communities, providing facilities for local families, building community capacity and increasing visitation that benefits local businesses.

With the additional \$10 million funding through the Regional Package, the Tiny Towns Fund will focus on delivering economic development, social, environmental, and wellbeing outcomes in regional Victoria as well as supporting First Peoples, accessibility and inclusion.

The Tiny Towns Fund will complement other regional and suburban initiatives including:

- engagement with local businesses, Regional Partnerships, local government and non-government organisations to revitalise towns and activity centres located in areas experiencing economic transition or social disadvantage, and
- competitive grants programs that support local community-building projects.

Our communities are known for their unique strength and determination. This has been demonstrated in countless ways over the past years. We are focused on making our regional and interface communities even better places to live, work, visit and invest – from our smallest towns to our biggest regional cities.

Round 1 and 2 of the Tiny Towns Fund supported almost 400 projects, and I very much look forward to seeing more of the great ideas that I know can be generated when people work together to support and improve their local communities.

Jaclyn Symes MP

Minister for Regional Development

1 Fund Overview

1.1 About the Fund

The Victorian Government has established the Tiny Towns Fund with investment of \$20 million over four years, starting in 2023-24.

The Tiny Towns Fund will support local projects in communities with a population of up to 5,000 people in the 48 local government areas of regional Victoria, Alpine Resorts, and the 10 interface local government areas of Casey City Council, Cardinia Shire Council, Hume City Council, Melton City Council, Mitchell Shire Council, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, Nillumbik Shire Council, Whittlesea City Council, Wyndham City Council and the Yarra Ranges Shire Council.

The Fund will support the delivery of community infrastructure and facilities projects in Victoria's smallest towns.

The \$20 million fund comprises:

- \$10 million announced in the Victorian Budget for 2023-24 with \$2.5 million for projects in interface local government areas and \$7.5 million for projects in regional Victorian local government areas and Alpine Resorts.
- \$10 million allocated from the \$2 billion Regional Package, is exclusively for projects in regional Victorian local government areas and Alpine Resorts. It is focused on delivering economic, social, environmental, and wellbeing outcomes in regional Victoria as well as supporting First Peoples, accessibility and inclusion.

The Fund will be delivered by Regional Development Victoria, part of the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) for regional projects, and the Suburbs team in the Program and Integration branch within the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) for metropolitan interface area projects.

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Applicants may apply for a minimum grant of \$5,000 and a maximum grant of \$50,000 (not including GST).

Applications for Round 3 open on Wednesday 5 November 2025 and close at 4:00 pm on Wednesday 4 February 2026.

1.2 Fund Objectives

The Tiny Towns Fund responds to the needs of local people and aims to increase liveability, opportunity and prosperity in small towns in Victoria.

The fund will:

- support economic development within small towns as places where local businesses can thrive
- address gaps in community infrastructure and facilities in Victoria's smallest communities
- build community pride and enhance living, working, socialising and recreation in small towns
- strengthen social cohesion and support the increased participation in community life and community inclusion of all residents, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians, people living with disability, LGBTQIA+ communities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and isolated communities
- increase the capacity of community groups and local organisations to provide leadership and connect, service and engage residents in small towns.

1.3 Fund Outcomes

The desired outcomes for the Tiny Towns Fund for the short and long term are:

- small towns have better public places and spaces for increasing social and economic interaction from improved local infrastructure and facilities
- small towns have increased potential to attract more visitation and gain economic benefit
- community groups in small towns have increased capacity to engage residents and visitors in social and economic activity
- residents of small towns have a more positive perception of place and enhanced liveability
- small towns have enhanced economic, social, environmental, and wellbeing outcomes in regional Victoria
- small towns have increased participation in community life and higher community inclusion for all residents.

2 Grant Funding

Applicants may seek a **minimum of \$5,000 and up to a maximum of \$50,000** in grant funding per project (exclusive of GST). Every project requires its own application.

A maximum amount of \$50,000 per town will be applied for Round 3 to enable an equitable and broad geographic spread of funding.

Where there are multiple applicants with projects from the same town, these applicants are encouraged to work together, including with local government, to put forward high-quality applications for agreed projects that strongly align with the program guidelines. This could be one agreed project or multiple projects that combined do not exceed \$50,000.

Grant amounts may be reduced if ineligible expenses are requested as part of the project budget or where co-contribution evidence does not cover the required amount.

2.1 Co-contribution requirements

All applicants are required to make a co-contribution towards the proposed project budget in line with the requirements outlined in [Section 2.3](#) below.

The co-contribution may come from the applicant organisation or from other sources but must not be from other Victorian Government programs or sources.

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The value of land put towards a project is not considered in the calculation of a co-contribution.

Accepted sources of co-contribution may include:

- contributions from community groups, businesses, or philanthropic organisations
- grants/contributions from local government and Alpine Resorts
- contributions from utility/service providers, and
- grants from the Australian Government, or other state governments in the case projects benefiting cross-border communities.

Applicants must provide evidence that demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the relevant department, that the applicant has sufficient funds available for the required co-contribution amount. If the evidence is not provided, the application is likely to be deemed ineligible. See [Section 7.2](#) for evidence requirements.

2.2 In-kind contributions

An in-kind contribution is a contribution of a good or a service rather than money.

Local government and Alpine Resort applicants are not eligible to claim in-kind contributions.

All other applicants (other than local government and Alpine Resorts) can provide in-kind contributions towards a project budget up to 50% of the applicant's total contribution and at the following rates:

- professionals costed at \$80-\$150 per hour
- skilled labour costed at \$45 per hour
- unskilled labour costed at \$25 per hour, and/or
- equipment costed at standard commercial hire rates.

2.3 Project budgets and co-contributions

The proposed project budget must show the following co-contribution percentages:

Co-contribution	Percentages
Applicants other than Local Government and Alpine Resorts	20% of the total proposed project budget must be co-contributions (which can include 50% in-kind)
Rural councils and Alpine Resorts (see Appendix 1)	25% of the total proposed project budget must be co-contributions (this cannot include in-kind)
Regional cities and interface councils (see Appendix 1)	50% of the total proposed project budget must be co-contributions (this cannot include in-kind)

Should you need assistance with calculating your co-contribution, including in-kind contribution, please contact your relevant RDV office or the Suburbs team in the Program and Integration branch within DTP via the contact details in these program guidelines.

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2.4 Example project budgets

Example One: For a community group, the co-contribution must be at least 20% of the total proposed project budget, as an example:

A community group applicant's total project cost is \$10,000. The applicant can apply for a \$8,000 Tiny Town Fund grant but would have to contribute a further \$2,000 from other sources. The Applicant also has the option of nominating 50% of the contribution as in-kind contribution (being \$1,000).

- The total proposed project budget could then be:
- \$8,000 – Tiny Towns Fund grant
- \$1,000 – other cash contributions
- \$1,000 – in-kind support.

Example Two: For a rural council, the co-contribution must be at least 25% of the total proposed project budget, as an example:

A rural council applicant's total project cost is \$10,000. The council can apply for a \$7,500 Tiny Towns Fund grant but would have to contribute a further \$2,500 from other sources.

The total proposed budget would then be:

- \$7,500 – Tiny Towns Fund grant
- \$2,500 – other cash contributions (no in-kind support eligible).

Example Three: For a regional city or interface council, the co-contribution must be at least 50% of the total proposed project budget, as an example:

An interface council applicant's total project cost is \$10,000. The council can apply for a \$5,000 Tiny Towns Fund grant but would have to contribute a further \$5,000 from other sources.

The total proposed budget would then be:

- \$5,000 – Tiny Towns Fund grant
- \$5,000 – other cash contributions (no in-kind support eligible).

3 Applicant Eligibility

This fund is open to applications from incorporated not-for-profit community organisations and local governments that operate in Victoria. See [Section 3.2](#) for ineligible organisations.

Applicants that were successful in Rounds 1 and 2 can apply in Round 3, provided that previously funded projects have been completed or are nearing completion as determined by the department.

3.1 Eligible Applicants

Applicant organisations must:

- hold an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- be an eligible legal entity type as at [Section 3.2](#); and
- operate in a Victorian location (irrespective of where the applicant is based).

3.2 Eligible entity types

Eligible applicants include:

- an Incorporated not-for-profit association
- a Victorian local government
- a Crown land Committee of Management¹
- a Victorian Alpine Resort²
- Australian public companies limited by guarantee whose governing rules demonstrate a not-for-profit purpose
- an indigenous organisation incorporated under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*
- an industry association or business chambers; or
- a co-operative, registered in Victoria under the Co-operatives National Law.

3.3 Auspice arrangements

Organisations that operate in a Victorian location who are not incorporated entities and/or do not have a current valid ABN, may apply using an auspice arrangement.

An auspice arrangement is where another organisation ('auspisor') agrees to enter into the grant agreement on behalf of the applicant ('auspicee') and be responsible for the acquittal of the agreement. The applicant organisation is still responsible for the delivery of the grant project. Only the auspicee can apply.

Only Victorian local governments may act as an auspisor for applicants with projects in their jurisdiction. The auspisor accepts responsibility for the project and will agree to comply with all obligations under the grant agreement entered into to receive the grant.

3.4 Ineligible Applicants

Successful applicants from rounds 1 and 2 cannot apply unless the previously funded project/s have been completed or are near completion (as determined by the department).

The following types of applicants are not eligible to apply:

- unincorporated organisations, unless under an auspice arrangement where the auspice entity accepts legal responsibility for the grant funds (see [Section 3.3](#))
- Australian Government or Victorian or other state government agency or body
- a for-profit company
- an individual
- a sole trader
- an incorporated trustee on behalf of a trust
- an individual partner on behalf of a partnership
- pre-school, primary and secondary schools
- an incorporated joint venture; or
- a consortia application with a lead organisation,

¹Most voluntary committees of management are legally incorporated as organisations through the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*. A small number of committees are unincorporated. Some committees of management of Crown land reserves are organisations incorporated through legislation other than the Crown Land Reserves Act. For further information: www.deeca.vic.gov.au/boards-and-governance/committees-of-management

²Six alpine resorts are legally incorporated under the *Alpine Resorts (Management) Act 1997* and managed by [Alpine Resorts Victoria](#)

4 Eligible Project locations

The project must be located in one of the eligible 48 rural and regional Victorian council areas, or Alpine Resorts, or within one of the 10 interface councils of Casey City Council, Cardinia Shire Council, Hume City Council, Melton City Council, Mitchell Shire Council, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, Nillumbik Shire Council, Whittlesea City Council, Wyndham City Council and the Yarra Ranges Shire Council (refer to [Appendix 1](#) for full list).

The project must be located in an eligible location with a population up to 5,000 people.

The project location cannot be a 'suburb' of a regional city or interface cities (e.g., Sebastopol which is part of Ballarat) or other larger regional towns (e.g., Colac West).

Applicants are encouraged to look at the ABS Census Population Data 2021 (suburbs and localities data set: abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area) in relation to the population of a town/location, and also contact their relevant departmental office (see [Appendix 2](#)) if they are unclear on their location eligibility.

Applications can be submitted for projects in ineligible locations on the following basis:

- additional data or town population evidence is provided that may support further consideration of locational eligibility
- locations with a population of up to 5,500 (being 10% above the population limit) can request special consideration in acknowledgement that the population data used to assess applications (2021 Census data) may not reflect the current town population.

Applications with cross-border town implications for Victorian communities will be considered on a case-by-case basis. This is to ensure that cross-border communities can access the Tiny Towns Fund where the benefits may be shared between Victorian and South Australian or New South Wales locations.

Eligibility is assessed by the location of the **project** and not the location of the **applicant**.

The relevant department will make the final decision on what is considered to be an eligible project location under the Tiny Towns Fund.

5 What will be funded

Applicants will be asked in their application to describe a proposed project that shows a direct benefit to the town and its community through alignment with the Tiny Town Fund objectives at [Section 1.2](#).

5.1 Eligible Activities and Expenses

The grant amount and co-contribution may be spent on eligible activities and expenditure as listed below. Projects must not commence prior to receiving funding approval.

The relevant department will make the final decision on what is considered to be an eligible activity and what is eligible expenditure under the Tiny Towns Fund. Grant amounts may be reduced if ineligible expenses are included as part of a project budget. Eligible infrastructure and facilities activities include:

- refurbishment and upgrades to community facilities and buildings including halls, libraries, community centres and hubs that will support local people and groups to connect better
- improvements of public spaces, activity centres and street beautification that encourage use including public art, street furniture, drinking fountains and greenery, the creation of community gardens, park upgrades and dog parks
- updates to local tourism attractions such as splash parks, hiking trails, paths and playgrounds to encourage visitation
- the improvement or creation of space to support community art, creativity and cultural spaces
- development or improvement of community gathering spaces, such as community gardens, amphitheatres or BBQ facilities
- enhancements to safety, accessibility and connections into and within shopping strips and activity centres to enable access for all including accessible paths and lighting

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- refurbishment and upgrades to community facilities and/or public spaces that encourage inclusion of groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians, people living with disability, LGBTQIA+ communities, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
- planning projects, including community infrastructure feasibility plans leading to activation of community projects
- recovery projects to help communities recover from economic shocks such as bushfire, storms or industry closures and job losses.

Eligible community capacity building activities:

- networking and relationship building activities and projects that promote participation in community life such as community arts projects, community building days and community volunteer projects
- activities and projects that support community building and inclusion through celebrating culture, embracing diversity and building community cohesion and connection
- projects that support Traditional Owner communities and groups to enhance and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, community and economic development, participation and leadership.

Trade services costs related to infrastructure and facilities upgrade, installation and development can be claimed as part of the grant amount provided the business/service provider has complied with all relevant permits, laws and regulations as applicable (for example, using licensed electricians).

Applications that request funding for activities that are part of a larger existing project that has previously received government funding for an earlier stage may still be eligible, as long as funding requested from this program is for new activities that have not been undertaken and do not duplicate expenses paid for with previous funding. This is not considered retrospective or duplicate funding.

5.2 Ineligible Activities and Expenses

The relevant department will make the final decision on what is considered to be an ineligible activity and what is ineligible expenditure under the Tiny Towns Fund.

The grant amount and co-contribution may not be spent on the following ineligible activities and expenditure:

- Sporting facilities infrastructure projects such as sports courts, sports grounds, swimming pools, cricket pitches/training nets, equestrian facilities, sports scoreboards, sports lighting, players/umpire rooms etc.
 - Note: projects that improve shared multi-use spaces at sporting facilities which are used by the broader community remain eligible (e.g. Event spaces, meeting and community rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, outdoor areas, public amenities etc).
- requests for retrospective funding where projects are already being delivered or have already been completed prior to receiving funding approval
- activities that are already supported by other Victorian Government funding (other than additional stages or separate discrete components of a larger overall project, as mentioned in [section 5.1](#))
- single purchase of appliances such as fridges, ovens and other kitchen equipment (unless part of a broader refurbishment or upgrade project)
- routine replacement, minor upgrade or purchase of mobile plant and equipment (e.g., trailers, lawnmowers and vehicles, computers and hardware)
- single purchase of furnishings for general use such as tables and chairs (unless part of a broader upgrade or renovation project)
- the purchase of land and/or buildings
- operational expenditure, including existing staff costs, communications, travel, entertainment, accommodation and office equipment
- basic and routine professional services including legal and accounting fees
- building routine websites, sales and promotional activities, marketing or communications campaigns
- clothing (except for protective clothing used in projects)
- sporting equipment and uniforms

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- projects requiring ongoing funding from the Victorian Government when completed
- GST is an ineligible expense for organisations registered for GST.

5.3 Costings of expenses and GST

Organisations NOT Registered for GST

For organisations not registered for GST, the cost of GST **can be included** in the project budget.

For example, if the cost or a quote for electrical works is \$6,600 which includes \$600 of GST, then you may cost the item at the GST inclusive price of \$6,600.

Organisations Registered for GST

For organisations that are registered for GST, the cost of the GST **must be excluded** from the project budget. This means if project expenses are costed at \$6,600 including \$600 of GST, then the costs must reflect the excluded GST amount of \$6,000.

For example, if the cost or a quote for plastering is \$5,500 including \$500 of GST, then you must cost the item based on the GST Exclusive price of \$5,000.

For organisations registered for GST, grant payments will be increased by 10% (if your application is successful).

5.4 Project Timeline

Projects must be completed within 18 months from the date of the funding letter of offer.

Applicants will be required to supply project start and end dates and preferred milestone due dates and proposed key deliverables as part of their application.

6 Key Dates

The dates below are indicative dates only and may be subject to change.

Status	Date
Grant Applications Open Date	5 November 2025
Grant Applications Close Date	4 February 2026
Assessment	February to May 2026
Announcements from	June 2026
Project completion	Within 18 months from the date of the funding letter of offer Note: Projects must not commence prior to receiving an offer of funding.

7 Applications

Priority will be given to applications for projects in towns that have not received funding through Rounds 1 or 2. This aims to increase geographic spread and equity of funding across Victoria.

Applicants that were successful in Rounds 1 and 2 can apply in Round 3, provided that previously funded projects have been completed or are nearing completion (as determined by the department).

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An applicant can submit multiple applications within Round 3, however given that individual towns can receive a maximum funding amount of \$50,000, towns with multiple projects and multiple potential applicants should work together to submit only one or more priority project/s up to this maximum funding amount.

Each project is required to have its own application (no 'multi-town' applications).

Applications must be submitted no later than 4:00 pm on Wednesday 4 February 2026.

Please note that late applications will not be accepted.

Applications that are still in 'draft' and have not been submitted by the closing date will not be assessed.

Applicants are encouraged to contact their relevant RDV office or the Suburbs team in the Program and Integration branch within DTP to discuss their project if needed (see contact details at [Appendix 2](#)).

7.1 Preparing an application

Applicants should undertake the following steps to apply:

- carefully read these Program Guidelines (and 'Frequently Asked Questions' for the Tiny Towns Fund)
- compile necessary supporting documents to apply as detailed in the 'Documentation and Information Requirements' below
- submit an application online via the 'Apply now' button on the Tiny Towns Fund page that can be accessed via the [RDV](#) and the [Department of Planning](#) websites.
- ensure an email confirmation of application submission is received by checking your nominated email account and check spam/junk mail if confirmation email cannot be seen in your inbox
- confirm submission of the application by checking your nominated email address for the confirmation email (or spam/junk mail).

For guidance on what information you should include in your application form, please visit the Tiny Towns Fund page on the [RDV](#) or the [Department of Transport and Planning](#) websites.

7.2 Documentation and Information Requirements

Applicants will be asked to provide supporting documents to strengthen the application. Applications that provide the required supporting evidence will be scored higher.

Please note:

- not all types of application support documents will be appropriate for each project
- information provided should be concise and directly support the proposal
- supporting material provided through links to non-public websites, or platforms where materials can be edited after submission will not be assessed
- the relevant department may contact an applicant to obtain further information where there is minor clarification required on submitted evidence
- an application may be deemed ineligible due to insufficient supporting documentation.

Document Type	Description	Requirement
Evidence of primary budget costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost estimates based on evidence where possible (e.g., may include quotations for goods and services to be purchased). Applications with quotes and cost breakdowns will be scored higher• It is recommended that applicants factor a 3 to 5 percent contingency allowance into their cost estimation.• See Section 5.3 for note on GST.	Mandatory

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Document Type	Description	Requirement
Evidence of co-contribution funds	<p>Co-contribution of funds cannot come from other Victorian Government programs or funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written confirmation from the applicant organisation's board or authorised representative that the organisation can undertake the project and meet the required co-contribution amount and/or, A bank statement showing sufficient cash in the organisation's bank account to cover the co-contribution and/or, Written confirmation from another organisation confirming its contribution towards the project. <p>If the applicant does not provide this evidence, the application is likely to be deemed ineligible.</p>	Mandatory
Letters of support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of support for the project where relevant, for example from local councils, local business, tourism associations and Traditional Owner organisations. 	Optional but recommended
Approvals and permits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of any permissions, permits, consents, licences, plans, certificates and approvals that are required or desirable to obtain to commence, carry out and complete the Project and the expected time frame for obtaining them. Evidence of support from the appropriate government authority, facility owner or landowner to use or upgrade the land/facility for the project if the organisation is not the owner of the land/facility. 	Mandatory where applicable
Auspice information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The application must include written confirmation from a senior position within the auspice organisation that they have reviewed the application and agree to it, and that they will be responsible for the acquittal of the grant (for example - Chief Executive Officer). 	If applicable

8 Assessment

The following assessment process will be undertaken:

- All applications will be reviewed against the eligibility criteria ([Section 8.1](#)).
- Applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed through a multi-stage assessment process, including against the assessment criteria in [Section 8.1](#).
- Approval of a lesser amount than applied for may occur if part of the expenditure is deemed ineligible.
- Applicants will receive an email advising of the outcome of an application.

In making recommendations, the relevant department will consider the funding cap for each town (\$50,000) and the spread of funding across eligible areas of Victoria, to ensure that the benefits of the Tiny Towns Fund are shared across communities and geographies.

Funding recommendations will be made to either the Minister for Regional Development or the Minister for Development Victoria and Precincts for final decision depending on the location of the project.

8.1 Assessment criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed on how well they meet the assessment criteria as outlined below. All supplementary attachments and information provided as part of the application will be taken into consideration during the assessment process.

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Eligibility Criteria	Considerations	Requirement
Applicant is an eligible entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligible entity check 	Mandatory
Project eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is an eligible activity and expense as per Section 5.1 	Mandatory
Location eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is located in a town of up to 5,000 people in an eligible council area (see Appendix 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population data could be obtained from recent ABS Census Population Data 2021 (abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area). Applicants are also encouraged to contact their relevant departmental office (see Appendix 2) if they are unclear on their location eligibility. Project must be located in a public space that allows public access (i.e., not residential). 	Mandatory
Evidence confirming co-contribution sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence confirming co-contribution funding sources that demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the relevant department, that the applicant has sufficient funds available for the required co-contribution amount for the project. 	Mandatory

Assessment Criteria	Considerations	Weighting
Project alignment Project demonstrates alignment with the Tiny Towns Fund outcomes (Section 1.3)	The application demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well the project aligns with the Tiny Towns Fund outcomes as listed in Section 1.3 how the project has local impact and community benefit. E.g., how the project is focused on supporting First Peoples, accessibility, inclusion, and delivering on economic, social and environmental and/or wellbeing outcomes how the project encourages and supports economic development outcomes for towns and communities. 	40%
Demand and need for the project The local opportunity, need or challenge the project is looking to address, the project's feasibility and likely future use.	The extent to which the applicant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifies, responds to and addresses an opportunity, need or challenge relevant to the town demonstrate project need, for example through community engagement or support through local stakeholders. 	30%
Project readiness and capability of the applicant to implement and manage the project	The extent to which the applicant can demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the project is ready to proceed and has identified outcomes, timelines, budget and delivery risks that the applicant possesses the skills and capabilities to deliver the project any required approvals are either in place or have an appropriate pathway to be achieved (if applicable). 	20%
Value for money	The extent to which the applicant can demonstrate:	10%

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• costings for the project are reasonable and based on sound estimates, such as quotes• inability to fund the project from other revenue streams or grant programs.	
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8.2 Applicant checks

Applicants may be subject to due diligence assessments to enable the relevant department to assess financial and other non-financial risks associated with the application. Outcomes from such assessments may be considered in any decision to recommend or award a grant and in contracting with successful applicants. Such checks may include:

- the potential for reputational risk to the State
- where the proposal has already been fully funded by the applicant through other means
- the delivery performance of other grants previously contracted with the Victorian Government
- business regulator check.

The relevant department may, at any time, remove an applicant from the application and assessment process, if in the relevant department's opinion, association with the applicant may bring the relevant department, a Minister or the State of Victoria into disrepute.

Business regulator check

A business regulator check may be undertaken to verify business details provided with the Australian Business Register, Australian Securities and Investment Commission, Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commissioner, Consumer Affairs Victoria and/or other applicable regulator.

9 Conditions of Funding

Successful applicants will be invited to enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the State of Victoria as represented by either the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions or the Department of Transport and Planning, depending on the location of the project.

An offer of funding is not binding on the relevant department unless and until both the relevant department and the applicant execute the grant agreement.

The project must not commence until the grant agreement has been executed (signed) by both the relevant department and the applicant.

The grant agreement details all funding obligations and conditions such as:

- payments
- funding use
- grant activity deliverables
- monitoring and milestones
- project outcomes
- reporting and acquittals
- audit
- termination and refund conditions.

Once the grant agreement has been executed, the grant recipient (successful applicant) will be required to commence the project within the agreed timeframe. If a recipient does not commence the project by the commencement date, the relevant department may in its absolute discretion terminate the grant agreement.

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9.1 Publicity/acknowledgement of support

The relevant department requires grant recipients to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support by using the Victoria State Government logo or relevant government entity logo under the title 'supported by' on promotional materials for the grant project.

Acknowledgement of the Victorian Government's support in promotional material will depend on the grant given and will be specified in the grant agreement, e.g., required representation on channels or collateral such as websites, signage, advertisements, and brochures. Where required, the grant recipient will be supplied a logo suite and associated brand guidelines, as well as a guide on how to acknowledge government support.

The relevant department may include the name of the recipient organisation in its annual report.

Recipients must obtain written confirmation from the relevant department of a successful application before making public announcements about receiving the grant. The relevant department may promote the benefits of the grant and the State's support for the project, and recipients must cooperate with the relevant department in promoting the Tiny Towns Fund. These requirements will form part of the Grant Agreement with successful applicants.

9.2 Program Surveys

As a condition of funding, grant recipients will be required to participate in evaluation activities. This may include completing surveys throughout the delivery of the funded project and for a nominated period after project completion to measure progress towards achieving outcomes.

Evaluation is critical to the Victorian Government in understanding the impact of the Tiny Towns Fund, supporting continuous improvement in program design and delivery, and for delivering effective outcomes for Victoria.

10 Privacy Statement

Any personal information provided in an application for this program will be collected and used for the purposes of assessing eligibility, program administration, program review and evaluation.

The relevant department completes a range of eligibility assessments that may include data matching to clarify the accuracy and quality of information supplied. This is part of our auditing and monitoring processes and for confirming eligibility across this program.

In the assessment of an application, it may be necessary to share personal information with State and Commonwealth Government departments and agencies, as well as other external experts. If personal information about a third party is included in the application, the applicant must ensure the third party is aware of and consents to the contents of this privacy statement.

The relevant department collects demographic information for economic reporting purposes. No personal information is used in reporting; all reports are presented with aggregated data.

Any personal information about the applicant or a third party will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed, or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) and other applicable laws.

For enquiries about access or correction of personal information, contact the relevant Regional Development Victoria office or the Suburbs team in Program and Integration branch within the Department of Planning ([Appendix 2](#)). Other concerns regarding the privacy of personal information, can be emailed to the Privacy Unit at privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au. The relevant department's privacy policy can be made available by emailing the Privacy Unit.

11 Terms of Applying

11.1 Department Probity and Decision Making

The Victorian Government makes every effort to ensure the grant application and assessment process is fair and undertaken in line with the published guidelines.

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The decisions on all matters on recommending and awarding of the grant funding is at the absolute discretion of the relevant Minister and relevant department. This includes not making any funding available or approving a lesser amount than that applied for.

These guidelines and the application terms may be changed from time to time, as appropriate.

The relevant department may request an applicant provide further information should it be necessary, to assess an application against the Tiny Town Fund's policy objectives.

Victorian Government staff are required to act in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Service Employees (Section 61) issued under the *Public Administration Act 2004* (Vic), including processes set out to avoid conflicts of interest. This includes an obligation to avoid conflicts of interest wherever possible and declare and manage any conflicts of interest that cannot be avoided.

11.2 Complaints and feedback

Any complaints or feedback you have about this grant opportunity may be made in relation to:

- the timeliness of the process
- communication provided by the relevant department
- adherence to the published program guidelines.

You can send your written feedback to your relevant Regional Development Victoria office or the Suburbs team in the Program and Integration branch within the Department of Planning ([Appendix 2](#)). The department aims to respond to complaints and feedback within 28 days.

11.3 Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which someone in a position of trust or influence has competing professional or personal interests.

Applicants must advise DJSIR or DTP of any real or perceived conflict of interest relating to a project for which it has applied for funding.

11.4 Information only

Any discussions you may have had with your RDV or the Department of Planning representative are for information only, and do not constitute advice.

Applicants should seek independent advice before making an application or entering into a grant agreement.

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9.7 Tourism Event: Request for Fee Waiver

Directorate: Sustainable Development

Author: Katy McMahon, Manager Economy & Prosperity

Executive Summary

A request for fee waiver has been received for a proposed Lunch at the Farm event which forms part of the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival. A copy of the request and proposal has been circulated under separate cover.

Recommendation

That Council approve the waiver request for planning and building permit fees for the proposed Lunch at the Farm event, part of the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival, to a total of \$2,285.90.

Discussion/Key Matters/Issues

Council has received a request for a fee waiver for an event, Lunch at the Farm, that showcases local produce and the 12 Apostles Artisan Food Trail. The event will be held at Great Ocean Road Ducks and forms part of the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival's regional program.

Council recently endorsed the Corangamite Destination Action Plan to support the development of the Visitor Economy across Corangamite Shire. The plan includes a number of actions. Actions of particular relevance to this event are:

- Leverage existing events and support development of new events across the Shire to drive visitation and celebrate our unique locations, industry and communities.
- Encourage businesses to showcase local produce/product and promote local experiences to encourage longer visits and dispersal throughout the Shire.

Council's Planning and Building Fee Waiver Policy details where applicants may apply for a fee waiver. However, the policy indicates that typically a fee waiver or reduction would be appropriate for charitable or community-based organisations. The planning permit applicant for the event is Great Ocean Ducks a business entity. As such the policy does not enable officers to grant the fee waiver request.

Council's Grants and Funding Policy provides a policy setting where 'one-off' funding can be provided for cases that do not align with specific grant programs or are time sensitive and cannot meet the annual budget timelines. The policy indicates requests will only be considered if they:

- Align with the objectives of the Council Plan and/or objectives of the relevant strategies and policy.
- Provide a community benefit or provide opportunities to drive social, environmental, cultural and economic outcomes or provide potential to generate revenue to the shire through visitor attraction.

The proposed event is a positive event for the Shire with the potential to enable significant promotion and marketing of the region and local artisan producers. The event is being delivered as part of the regional offerings within the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival. The event aligns closely with actions in Council's DAP, and Council Plan and will provide a positive economic outcome for the shire through visitor attraction.

Options for Council Consideration

Councillors have the option to support the request for fee waiver, not support the fee waiver or seek additional information.

Alignment to Council Plan

This report is in keeping with the commitments in the Council Plan 2025-2029:

A growing and prosperous economy

Support and promote local businesses

Enhance and promote tourism opportunities

Seek to diversify our economy including retail and hospitality and support creative industries

Relevant Law/Policy/Legal Implications

- Grant and Funding Policy, November 2025
- Planning and Building Fee Waiver Policy, September 2023

Collaborative Procurement

Nil

Consultation and Engagement

N/A

Financial Considerations

The request for fee waiver is seeking waivers of \$1546.10, for Planning Permit and notice fees and \$739.80 for Building Permit fees for a Place of Public Entertainment (POPE) permit, a total of \$2,285.90. Council does not have a current fee waiver budget to cover this waiver, and as such will need to draw on existing operational budgets or seek a budget variation from Council.

Diversity and Inclusion Considerations

N/A

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

N/A

Risk Consideration

N/A

Conflict of Interest

No officer involved in the preparation of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Attachments

1. Under Separate Cover - Fee waiver request Great Ocean Road Ducks [9.7.1 - 2 pages]
2. Under Separate Cover - Proposal Great Ocean Road Ducks [9.7.2 - 19 pages]

10 Other Business

11 Open Forum

Members of the public are very welcome to make statements or ask questions relevant to Corangamite Shire at the Open Forum section of scheduled Council meetings.

To assist with the smooth running of the meeting, we ask that you raise a maximum of two items at a meeting and please follow this procedure:

1. Wait until the Mayor asks if there are any items in Open Forum and invites you to speak.
2. Stand if you are able and introduce yourself.
3. Speak for a maximum of five minutes.

We will undertake to answer as many questions as possible at a meeting, and if we cannot answer a question at the meeting, we will provide a written response no later than five working days after the Council meeting.

12 Confidential Items

Nil

13 Close Meeting