

RESPONSE TO ISP PROPOSAL

By

Protect the West Group

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Introduction

Members of the Protect the West (P-t-W) are alarmed about the impact of climate changes in our environments therefore we are grateful to have an opportunity to comment upon genuine activity that moves towards more sustainable models of electricity development. The P- t- W group is one of many environmental groups in South West Victoria and membership includes farmers, nurses, teachers, artists, doctors, small business operators, and academics.

The P-t-W group contends that long-term greenhouse emission reduction is imperative to safeguard the quality of our air, food and water. The Integrated System Plan (ISP) report appears to be very thorough, covering a complex subject that challenges our very existence ... or life as 'we know it'. The P-t-W group comments will briefly highlight our concerns related to the investment in the National Electricity Market (NEM) and to the Optimal Development Path (ODP) outlined in the ISP.

Investment in NEM -Double the electricity it now delivers ...pages 8 & 9

The energy mix most certainly will need to change if Australia is serious about reducing its reliance on coal, but P-t-W would question if this transition away from coal will **double** electricity requirements. For example, Australia's projected population for 2050 is 35,900,000 which is approximately 10 million more people living in Australia today (1). Vehicle registration for 2021 is 20.1 million and likely to grow but not double (2). Therefore, the projected doubling of energy sources may be an over estimate of Australian consumption requirements and may eliminate the need for further new fossil fuel developments. Perhaps we need to ration what we have left in the system??

The ISP also indicated that 9GW of gas-fired generation would be needed for peak loads /firming ... page 9.

The projected need for 9 GW gas-fired generation seems excessive given the uptake of renewal energy sources in Australia today. Any 'Natural' Gas is an environmental hazard impacting upon the welfare of both humans and wild life therefore, should be limited and used with great care.

The mining of gas and infrastructure needed to deliver gas to homes and industries is not only harmful but extensive, invasive and expensive. It could

also be argued that exporting gas, a dangerous substance, is unethical. Communities are becoming **less reliant** on natural gas as demonstrated in the AEMO Victorian Planning Report (3) and behavioural modification related to lifestyle practices around energy uses have occurred. Additional sound community educational programs regarding rationalised energy uses, particularly in households and transportation along with our current effective technologies could well reduce the need for more natural gas. Therefore, would it not be possible to look to a future without fossil fuels by 2035?

Optimal Development Path - REZ development reports ...pages 12 & 14

On the map in the ISP document (page 14), South West Victoria has been earmarked for expansion as a renewable energy zone (REZ). The P-t-W group would be interested receiving more information related to the REZ in South Western Victoria.

Given the pivotal role of farming to the Victorian economy the agriculture sector must be protected from harm. There are approximately 3554 farms in South Western Victoria and they have the largest agricultural output of any Victorian region. Farms in the South West have been classified as highly specified, therefore vulnerable to climate changes.

Examples of Produce in the SW:

- 28% of Victorian beef
- 31% of Victorian milk and nearly ¼ of national milk supply worth \$1 billion annually
- 34% of sheep meat
- Contains 20% of Australian forest plantations. (4) & (5)

Agricultural produce generates a substantial contribution to the Victorian economy. The 'Victoria's gross value of agricultural production (GVAP) was \$17.8 billion in 2019–2020, an increase of 12 per cent from 2018–2019. Victoria is Australia's largest agricultural producer by value, with Victoria's GVAP representing 29 % of Australia's GVAP (6).

In conclusion, thank you for encouraging community participation in the development of pathways that will lead to sustainable practices. Scientific literature has suggested that a reduction in the production and use of fossil fuels would help to lower greenhouse emissions and advance the ability of the agriculture sector to generate clean, uncontaminated produce for us all. To this end we would argue, for activity that articulates clear guidelines for the

development of sustainable electrification of our homes / industries and reduces our reliance on fossil fuels.

References

- (1) ABS (2022). Population. Retrieved February 8th, 2022 from <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population>
- (2) Motor Vehicle Census (2021 Jan 21). Australian Vehicle Fleet hits 20 Million. Retrieved February 7th from <https://www.abs.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/australian-vehicle-fleet-hits-20-million>.
- (3) AEMO (2021b). Victorian Gas Planning Report, Gas Transmission Network Planning for Victoria. Retrieved January 27th, 2022 from <https://aemo.com.au/-/media>
- (4) Silvester. Ben (2022, Jan 22). Environment: Extreme Forecast. The Standard, Warrnambool Victoria, Australia.
- (5) Rollinson, Geoff (2022). Climate factors from the Barwon South West Regional Climate Adaptation Strategy. Victoria Australia.
- (6) Victoria Government. Victoria's agriculture and food Industries. Retrieved February 7th, 2022 from <https://agricultur.vic.gov.au>