SUBMISSION ON:
MOYNE SHIRE COUNCIL DRAFT WIND FARM POSITION
1 July 2022

Introduction

The Clean Energy Council is pleased to provide a submission in response to the Moyne Shire Council’s Draft Wind Farm Position.

The Clean Energy Council (CEC) is the peak body for the clean energy industry in Australia. We represent and work with over 1,000 of the leading businesses operating in renewable energy, energy storage and renewable hydrogen. We are committed to accelerating Australia’s clean energy transformation.

Moyne Shire is an important renewable energy region

We welcome the Council’s review of its 2018 position. Australia’s regional and rural communities play a vital role in the deployment of renewable energy in Australia and Moyne Shire in particular plays a crucial role in Victoria’s transition to renewable energy. This role will only grow in significance over time in Victoria as the state works towards, and then beyond, its target of 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030. The Moyne Shire is one of Victoria’s most important renewable energy regions, due to its excellent wind resources.

It is therefore critical that renewable energy proponents work in partnership with local communities in the delivery of new projects. The CEC promotes best practice community engagement within our membership and the industry more broadly. We now have over 50 signatories to our Best Practice Charter which commits signatories to (amongst other things):

- Engaging respectfully with the local community
- Consulting with the community
- Supporting the local economy
- Offering community benefit opportunities
- Responsible decommissioning

Benefits from renewable energy in Moyne Shire

We understand the need to allow for the growth and expansion of regional towns. We also note that wind farms are important to the growth of regional towns, by providing investment and employment in regional communities, whilst supporting the reliability of energy supply as our electricity system transitions away from traditional gas and aging coal to affordable and clean alternatives.

Wind farms in Moyne Shire, like those across the country, have provided improvements such as road upgrades and additional income for landholders, and provide millions of dollars to the Council in Payment in Lieu of Rates. Furthermore, we estimate that operating wind farms in Moyne directly
contributed over $230,000 in 2020 to the local Moyne Shire community by way of community funds, with over $12 million dollars in contributions to the community over the next 20 years, let alone future projects being built. This amount is expected to grow as more wind farms commence construction and operation.

**Recommendations**

While we generally support the list of factors that should be considered by the State Government in its REZ development process, we submit that the Council **should not recommend** that the State Government pause the issuing of all wind farm planning permits until strategic land use planning in the South West REZ is completed.

Firstly, REZ strategic planning process is lengthy and complex. NSW, which was the first state to develop specific legislation and policy around REZs at the end of 2020, is still yet to finalise all the REZ areas, let alone the community engagement policy, including policy around cumulative impacts. Considering that strategic planning for REZs can take years, we therefore submit that a pause on the issuing of all wind farm planning permits would lead to significant uncertainty and risk for investors, potentially jeopardising a number of important projects that will bring benefits to the region.

Secondly, the CEC submits that consider that the issues outlined in the Draft Wind Farm Position can be considered without pausing wind farm planning permits and can certainly be addressed prior to the completion of the strategic REZ planning. We have seen some of these issues addressed by the NSW Government by way of guidelines for the large-scale solar industry, which will be finalised in the coming months, and soon the development of similar guidelines for the wind industry. The CEC also notes that we are working with industry and governments to update our position on decommissioning.

Additionally, we consider that there is broad support in the Moyne Shire for wind farms. For example, polling in 2021 showed that 63 per cent of people in the Federal electorate of Wannon (which encompasses the Moyne Shire) believe the benefits they receive from greater action on climate change outweigh any costs involved and 64 per cent believe it will strengthen the economy.

Finally, pausing wind farm applications will necessarily mean a delay to the state’s transition to clean energy, thereby delaying climate action. This would stand in contrast to Council’s 2019 climate emergency declaration which said Council’s approach to planning “will be made with the climate emergency in mind”.

In conclusion, we strongly submit that the Council should reconsider its recommendation that the State Government pause the issuing of all wind farm planning permits until strategic land use planning in the South West REZ is completed. We consider that the issues outlined in the Draft Wind Farm Position are worthy of deliberation by the State Government, but that this can occur simultaneously to the REZ strategic planning being undertaken by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and that it is unnecessary to pause the approval of wind farm permits.
Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comment on the Council's Draft Wind Farm Position. We are happy to provide any further information that may be useful to your deliberations.

Regards,

[Signature]

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