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## **Request to upgrade Tyrendarra, Strathdownie Cape Bridgewater and Gorae West to three-phase power – Response to Powercor Revised Proposal 2021-2026**

The purpose of this letter is to express support for upgrading single-phase power to a three-phase service in Tyrendarra and surrounding areas of South West Victoria. For our region to continue being a significant contributor to the State's gross domestic product it is vital that it has the infrastructure needed to grow and develop.

There are already a number of major food processing and advanced engineering industry sectors based throughout the region that are heavily reliant on an effective power grid. However, the need for reliable power extends to many current primary producers, small and medium sized enterprises in hospitality, accommodation and tourism, as well as new and emerging industry segments. Regional areas are already materially disadvantaged compared to metropolitan and urban areas when it comes to utility services, health, education and transport; and a pro-active approach is needed to redress this imbalance.

The Great South Coast understands the importance of long-term energy reliability. That is why it is a leader in renewable energy projects worth many billions. Regionally we are building on our early adoption of renewable energy (with some of Victoria's first wind farms located in the region) with a purposeful intent to embrace renewable technology adoption further. We recognise clean energy is a pathway for energy cost-savings and long-term environmental sustainability, whilst enhancing our ability to innovate and compete as a high-tech food and fibre sector with global reach. Numerous high-value renewables projects are already in various stages of planning and development across the region.

The 2019-2020 Victorian Food and Fibre Export Performance Report showed that Victoria delivered a record \$14.5 billion in exports and is well on target to reach its target of \$20 billion food and fibre exports by 2030. A positive milestone for farmers and Victoria that produces over a quarter of Australia's food and fibre exports, with most of this production generated within the Great South Coast. This result and growth projection demonstrates the strength of our region, however it is contingent on the infrastructure being in place to enable investment, diversification and innovation. For example, strengthening agricultural water security by modernising irrigation to better prepare the region for the impacts of climate change is intrinsically linked to a modernised power infrastructure. A short-sighted decision should not be allowed to jeopardise the region's development.

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We consider it is important to re-evaluate the role of population density as a deciding factor in determining the value of investments in power infrastructure upgrades. This model appears to place regional Victoria at a considerable disadvantage, which is disappointing considering regional Victoria has been acknowledged as critical in maintaining Victoria's economic resilience and food supply chain integrity during the pandemic. We encourage you to work with local stakeholders to review this process to ensure fairness for all Victorians.

As the region's largest training provider, we work with all major industry sectors across the region, and participate in a range of industry and government forums that are working to strategically plan for the region's long-term development. Health, education, transport, water, food and fibre production, heavy and advanced manufacturing, logistics, tourism, and food processing, all have significant energy needs that will be with us for many years.

We urge you to reconsider Powercor's decision to retain a single-phase service for the three areas and provide these Great South Coast businesses, industries and the wider community a power system that gives them confidence to build, invest, and take advantage of emerging opportunities to strengthen supply chains and local manufacturing.

Yours sincerely,



Dr John Flett  
Manager Strategic Projects, Grants & Research